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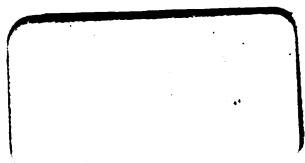
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Sunday-School Success

A Book of Practical Methods
for Sunday-School Teachers
and Officers ❁ ❁ ❁

By

Amos R. ^{Wells} Wells

Author of "Business," "When Thou Hast Shut Thy
Door," "Social Evenings," etc.



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Preface

IN these pages I have described the methods of the most successful teachers and Sunday-schools I have known. While a large part of the book is the direct fruit of my own experience in Sabbath and secular schools, it sets forth, as every teacher will understand, what I have learned from my failures rather than from my successes.

Though the volume has something to say on all the great Sunday-school problems, it does not pretend to be a complete manual; indeed, who could prepare one on so stupendous a theme? If it justifies its appearance among the admirable treatises already published for Sunday-school workers, it will be because it presents with frankness the methods found helpful by an average teacher, who never had charge of a large school or a large class, but in district school, small college, and small Sunday-school has struggled with the practical problems of a teacher, and in some of them at least, like Sentimental Tommy, has "found a way."

A large number of these chapters have appeared

Preface

in the "Sunday-school Times," and others in the "Sunday-school Journal" of the Methodists, the "Pilgrim Teacher" of the Congregationalists, the "Westminster Teacher" of the Presbyterians, the "Baptist Teacher," and the "Golden Rule." I am grateful to these periodicals for permission to include this material in my book.

AMOS R. WELLS.

BOSTON, September, 1897.

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Sunday-School Success

Chapter I

The Teacher's Crown

IN one of those dreams which are truer than waking there passed before me a long line of the Sunday-school teachers I have known. One after the other they appeared—those that had taught my childish lips to repeat the Bible words, those that had led my youth into the opening glories of the International Lessons, those that had put to rest the rising doubts of the young man and clinched his faith to the Rock of ages; those, also, of less blessed memory, whom I knew in early or later years, that had done none of these things, but other good things not so good.

And I noted in astonishment, as each came into view, that all were decked with diverse crowns. I had not looked long before I saw that these crowns were not arbitrary and artificial, but sprung from the

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very substance of the character of each. They had all received their reward, but according to their deeds.

First came a teacher whom I remembered merely as an eloquent talker. His words were deftly chosen, his sentences smoothly formed. His teaching was a charming harangue, bright with metaphor, flashing with sparkling parables. I loved to listen to him. I was as proud of him as he was of himself. To be sure, the only good thing he ever did for me was to inspire in me the vain desire to become an equally eloquent talker, but yet I was sorry he had not received a nicer crown. It looked very beautiful, as if it were thickly studded with lovely pearls richly iridescent in the sun; but when he came near I saw that each pearl was a little bubble swollen from a reservoir within. These bubbles were bursting all over the crown, fresh ones ever taking their place. It was a very pretty sight, yet a very trivial crown, and I was sorry for him.

There were several worthy teachers in the line whom I remembered as careful instructors in Bible history. They had every date at tongue's end, knew the order of the books and their contents, the relationships of the prominent characters to each other, all details of place and customs. They could repeat Bible verses by the yard, and gave prizes for such feats of unreasoning memory. They were mechanical, but thorough and useful. They had taught me how to dig into the Bible and study it as hard as I would study calculus. I was grateful to them for this,

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though they did no more, and so was rather sorry to observe their frail crowns. They were all of paper, neatly folded and plaited, and as I came nearer I saw that each crown was made up of leaves of the Bible.

I saw there also two or three teachers who had always taught with a sad countenance, teaching, not because they loved to teach, but because it was their duty to. "These," I thought, "will be joyful, now that their distasteful task is over and their reward has come"; but when I could see their faces clearly they looked mournful as ever. Their crowns were ebon black, pointed with little urns and lined with crape, and they often shifted them, pressing their hands gloomily to their brows, as if the crowns were very ill fitting and uncomfortable. They wore them with a martyr's air.

There were several teachers whom I remembered with gratitude because they had been so careful, in teaching, to emphasize always the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. These doctrines were the warp and woof of the solid fabric of their lessons. Over and over, in the same set phrases, they pressed those great truths, until, strive as one would, one could never forget them. But they never taught me the relation between these blessed doctrines and my own life. For years the formulas they had taught me remained for me mere words. And so I was not at all surprised to find their symbolic crowns solid and rich, but not attractive, for they were thickly set with jewels in the rough. Here and there, from beneath

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the incrusting stone, some magnificent gem would flash out, but the beauty and splendor of most of them were hidden.

In my fantastic dream I saw another, who had been a good teacher and a very poor one by turns. His piety and zeal were subject to great fluctuations, and a Sunday's teaching from him, carefully thought out, full of wise helpfulness, would be followed by a fortnight or more of questions read out of a question-book, lifeless and mechanical. I was prepared, therefore, to understand the meaning of his crown, which bore many beautiful gems, but these gems gave intermittent light, flashing out for a moment with most brilliant hues, then suddenly growing dull and dark.

One alone of all I saw in my strange dream wore a looking-glass crown. He had done his Sunday-school teaching, I had always feared, for the praise of men, to be seen of them. His attitude, his pompous words and gestures, irresistibly suggested to me always the posturing of an actor before a looking-glass. And so his crown was all a mirror—clear, bright, beautiful, but mirroring a looking-glass soul.

And now, closing the long procession, who are these I see? A thrice-blessed band, to me ever sacred. There is the cheery little matron whose brisk kindness gave charm to my introduction into Sunday-school life. There is the quiet and low-voiced lady whose gentle teachings carried me many a step toward my Saviour. There is the thoughtful and

The Teacher's Crown

saintly woman whose prayers for the school-boy went up, I know, night and morning; whose urgings were so earnest, brave, and wise. And there is the noble-hearted man, familiar with a young collegian's perplexities, sympathetic as a woman, trustful as a hero, strong and uplifting in word and friendly deed. I see them all, and from their glorified heads a wonder shining, a crown of light, beautiful as the love-gleam from a mother's eye. And every one of the crowding star-points of those crowns is for a life won to the happy service of the Master.

As I gazed with tear-dimmed eyes at the dear vision, an angel stood at my side and asked me, "What are all these thou hast seen?" "Forms," I answered, "of Christ's teachers I have met; of my own teachers, these last, all crowned as they have taught." "Yes," answered the angel, "but you have seen more than that. You have seen among them the crown you yourself will wear when your teaching days are over. Which shall it be?"

Chapter II

Who Should Teach in the Sunday-School ?

THE Master, who loves little children, stood in the Sunday-school door and cried to all that came up, "Who will teach my children about me?" And they all with one consent began to make excuse.

The preacher passing by said with conviction, "I have my sermons to preach, and Sunday-school work distracts my thought from them." Then answered the Master: "Crucify your pride in words, and seek the glory of deeds. This is your true sermon, to bring me close to human hearts. Thus did I most gladly preach, when on earth, to small classes and not to throngs. Thus should my ministers most gladly preach, face to face, one to half a dozen. You have many pulpits more effective than the elegantly furnished one to which you mount by three steps. They are the bedside, the wayside, the prayer-meeting table, the Sunday-school chair. Lovest thou me? Feed my lambs."

The teacher, when invited, shook his head with a

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sigh. "I teach all the week, and I am so tired! Why should I not rest on Sunday?" Then answered the Master: "The truest rest is a little change in work. Your Sunday-school and day-school will invigorate each other. It is I who have given you the sweet power of leading young lives. Should you not use it in leading them to me? Have you not seen how teaching your scholars in holy things the first day of the week draws them closer to you in your secular teaching of the other days? Do you not rejoice in the opportunity this work gives you to get an insight into your scholars' characters and mold them more directly than by the roundabout route of grammar and geography? Indeed, if I excuse any from my Sunday-school, you, to whom I have intrusted in especial measure the teaching gift, must not be the one."

The business man rejected the proposal with emphasis, saying: "As a matter of course, Sunday-school teaching is quite out of my line. My days are kept in close contact with dull matter, with cloth and coal and wood and iron. I have no time for books, except day-books and ledgers. My mechanical, routine business quite unfits me for religious teaching." To that the Master replied, smiling kindly: "I was a carpenter, my son, but holy thoughts kept pace with my plane, and firm conclusions were clinched with my hammer. And at evening, work done, I found time for prayer and meditation and calling young children about me to talk with them. Your contact

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with men and things makes you one of the most valuable of Sunday-school teachers. What parables are acted all around you, in nature, in your work, in the lives of your helpers! What illustrations lie heaped up in your business experience, ready to your hand! Most of these young people in my Sunday-school will choose some business like yours. How happy for them, then, if they could have you to tell them beforehand of its perils, strengthen them for its difficulties, point them the road to success and true happiness! No; I can better miss preacher and teacher from my Sunday-school than you mea of affairs."

Then came the care-worn housewife. "Master," said she, "I am perplexed and troubled about many things. My days, and often my nights, are crowded with a woman's myriad unheralded tasks. The children are ever with me. Why need I go to Sunday-school to teach them? Why not each home the mother's Sunday-school?" "Why not each home the prayer-meeting?" the Master asked her. "There come from numbers an interest, a help and inspiration, which you cannot get in the holiest family circle, and which you dare not miss. And what of the little ones whose mothers are less faithful than you? Have you no love to spare for them? I have implanted in the very nature of you mothers my most earnest call to Sunday-school teaching. What is it? The greatest love of little children."

And then came up two young people, a youth and

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a maiden, and said to the Master: "We are too young. We have had as yet no wonderful experience. We know nothing of death, of disease, of great sorrows, of heavy responsibilities. We are not wise in these high matters. We do not understand theology. We cannot teach." "Why," answered the Master, "neither do my little ones in the Sunday-school want to know about death or disease or heavy responsibilities. I would not have them taught what you think of as theology. But you are wiser than they. You see beyond their little worries and mysteries. Help them to your own measure of grace and strength, and as you teach and they grow, will not you grow, too, for further teaching ever? No, my young man and maid, with your ardent and fresh-hearted zeal; you can come very close to my little children, and I cannot spare you from my Sunday-school."

Long stood the Master there by the door of the Sunday-school, and many were those whom he called to the work, and many excuses were made. One pleaded ignorance. "But," gently questioned the Master, "have you a mind, to learn?" One urged timidity. "But I will be with you," said the Master. "There are others who can do it better," insisted one. "Will you not get them to do it, then?" begged the Master. "And if they will not do it, then you will be the best, and cannot refuse."

It was not long before a strong little group stood by the Master's side, ready for service, and as the regular teachers of the school came up, the Lord of

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whom they taught received them lovingly, or sadly turned them back. As hard-faced, unsympathetic Mr. Grim would enter—he whom all the children fear and elders do not love; he to whom a boy is only the necessary inconvenient early stage of a man, of promise only as he can commit to memory Bible verses—when he would enter the Master turned him back. “You must not teach my children,” said the blessed One, “until you become as a little child.”

He barred out also Mr. Brainy, whose ideal recitation is an argument, and whose scholars are far more familiar with points of skeptical controversy than with the Bible. He would not admit Miss Tangent, whose sole preparation for the lesson is the culling from her book of extracts of choice sentiments, pretty fables, and striking bits of verse of mysterious relevancy, which she recites for her scholars' admiration, and makes them learn. He turned back also Mrs. Scold, with her sharp tongue and cold eyes. He rejected Mrs. Job, who taught only from a sense of duty, and only with a long face.

But ah, the warm smile, the eager greeting, with which the Master welcomed the school's workers! There was Jack Manly, who had not waited for the desire to begin teaching, but had seen the need and filled it, not knowing how soon and largely the love for the work would come and grow. There was Lucy Gentle, who did not feel able to teach, yet considered, not her ability, but the need, knowing that duty is measured rather by the seeing eye than by the feeble

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hand. There was Mrs. Patient, who had hesitated to begin the work because of her ignorance of the Bible, but who by quiet and faithful study for her class had become a wise and thorough scholar of the Word. There was old Squire Greatheart, who taught a group of full-grown men and women whom he had gathered into a class when they were boys and girls, and had led ever since in hard study of God's Book.

There were many others whom the Master received, of many varied talents, for the Sunday-school can use a wide range of powers ; but all were alike in consciousness of their weakness compared with the greatness of their task, in willingness to resign their work to any better able who could be got to take it, in gladness to go on with it if their betters would not assume it, relying for success on the God of it. Their credentials were that they saw the need of the work, that they saw their own unfitness to do it, that they knew their fitness and power were assured when God assigned the task.

Thus the Master chose his teachers and blessed them ; and though there was no genius there, no mighty mind, no trained skill, but only humble readiness to serve, he poured out on them the fullness of his love and power, and they left the Sunday-school room ever bearing precious sheaves.

That is the end of my parable. Oh that all might know, as we, dear fellow-teachers, know it, the joy of our Sunday-school ministry ! Then superintendents

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would have no search to find teachers, no trouble to keep them. Then to the enlarging band of teachers would come a constantly enlarging band of scholars, and all together would soon bring the multitudes of the world into the host of the redeemed.

Chapter III

Preparing the Lesson

SOME teachers think that preparing the lesson is merely the loading of a cannon with powder, that it may go off with a big bang in the presence of admiring scholars. And the more powder, the bigger bang. So they load up with scintillating similes, and pretty parables, and striking stories.

Other teachers have set up some historical or theological or ethical target-board off at a distance from their class, and load their cannon with ball, that their scholars may see how accurate is their aim and how fairly they can hit the bull's-eye. So they prepare a mass of facts and figures, arguments and evidences.

But the wise teacher rejects *in toto* the cannon notion. He sees in each lesson a ledge of that grand mountain of life—of Christ-serving, strong life—up to which he must lead his little band, on which he must plant their feet so firmly that they may not slip back during the six days' interval, but may be ready for the next fair terrace, and the next.

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So the wise teacher, in preparing the lesson, knows that he must first reach that ledge himself; must repeat the journey over and over until he has learned the easiest way for little feet; must make ladders with rounds close together; must spread sand on slippery places and stretch ropes along the edge of the cliff. He, too, lays in supplies of stories and pretty parables, not, however, in the form of powder, to make a show, but (if this is not too severe a twist of the simile) as dainty food to keep the young travelers fresh and hearty. He, too, has facts and figures and arguments and evidences, not, however, as cannon-balls, but in the shape of iron bridges and railings and ropes, that the way may be solid and safe.

There are some teachers that do not study at all. It is as if a will-o'-the-wisp should undertake to guide one on an important journey. Those teachers are going they know not whither, over they know not what road, for what purpose they have not the slightest idea, and land always in a bog.

Emphatically, the teacher that is not always climbing himself will leave his class on a very dead level indeed. He should be reaching down and pulling them up, but he is soon compelled to stand where they are and push, and ends with believing his "level best" to lie along the smooth road of the easy-going valley.

The teacher who ceases to grow ceases to teach. That is why a Sunday-school lesson cannot be crammed. That is why preparation for it must ex-

Preparing the Lesson

tend all through the week. Growth cannot be ordered offhand. It comes from Father Time's shop, and he is a deliberate workman. You will lose your hold on your class if each Sunday hour does not begin with you a little above them, and end with them at your level. This advance cannot be won Saturday night, or during the space between the first and second bells for Sunday-school. Such a spasmodic leap ahead will leave you too much out of breath even to tell them to come on.

Dropping metaphor, of which we may have had too much, there are several substantial reasons why the Sunday-school preparation should extend over the seven days of the week. Thus only can you utilize in the Master's work odd bits of time, your Bible on the bureau while you dress, in your hands on the street-cars or while you wait for the meat to be cooked. There are many Bible verses which should be carefully committed to memory in connection with each lesson, as the teacher's best reliance for commentary and inspiration. These verses should be running through our heads as we run on all our six-day tasks, and should sing themselves to all our labor-tunes. But chiefly, it is only in this way that we can accumulate hints, and grow into the truths of the lesson by experience. With the lesson theme for a nucleus, it is astounding to see what a wealth of illustration, of wise and helpful comment, each day's living thrusts upon us. Every event is a picture of some truth which needs only a sensitive plate to be photographed forever.

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That sensitive plate is a mind which is studying that particular truth.

How much time do you spend in studying your Sunday-school lesson? You see that no true teacher can answer that question, any more than the poet can tell how long he is in writing his poem. This is the inspirational part of the teacher's work, and not the mechanical part, and his brooding will have issue of life just in proportion as the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart. But along with this lofty work must go lower processes, of which it is far easier to speak. I mean those lower processes which alone we are likely to call "studying." Permit me to lay down a programme for the study of a Sunday-school lesson.

To begin with, let it be always with pencil in hand. You have seen iron filings scattered in rough confusion over a sheet of glass. And then, when the magnet was placed beneath, you have seen those ugly bits of metal dance into the daintiest designs, fairy curves and most symmetrical figures. Such a delightful magnet is a pencil or a pen for all the disordered thoughts and fancies of our brains. Next to the Bible, the Sunday-school teacher's inseparable companion should be a lead-pencil.

What book is nearest you while you study your lesson? Teachers may be classified finally by their answers to that question. Is it the commentary, the atlas, the Bible dictionary, the concordance, the question-book, or the Bible? If the commentary, your comments will fall fruitless to the ground. If

Preparing the Lesson

the atlas, your class will wander nowhither. If the Bible dictionary, your diction will have no issue in deed. If the concordance, your class will know little from you of that concord which passes understanding. If the question-book, the value of all your study is at least questionable. No; let me emphasize this statement: *Not a single lesson help should be touched until everything possible to be learned about the lesson from the Bible directly has been learned.*

For this you will need two Bibles at least, one to be kept open at the lesson, one to turn back and forth in pursuit of references and information. The first must be a King James reference Bible; the second, the noble translation of Victoria's reign. Thus furnished, read the lesson. As you read, examine your mind. What questions assail it? Those moments are full of matter. Those questions are the clues to the lesson labyrinth. Those perplexities constitute your programme. "I wonder where this place is?" you will say to yourself. "Who was this man, and what was his past history, that he did this deed? What does this odd phrase mean? Is that sentiment a just one? Is that act a model for us modern folk?"

As these difficulties come up in your slow and thoughtful reading, jot them down, and the resultant half-sheet of scribbling means half the work accomplished. But hold! Did you read through a child's eye as well as your own? Did you read in the plural number? If not, you must read the lesson once more, with a poet's imagination noting this time the diffi-

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culties which you strode easily over, but which would soon trip up little feet. When you write down such points on your paper, underscore them. And underscore them again. A vast deal of preparation for teaching is fruitless because it is made in the singular number.

The next stage in our lesson study will be to answer our questions. Points in regard to antecedents and motives will be answered by the chapters intervening between the last lesson and this. Those should next be read. Many difficulties concerning customs and laws will be cleared up by parallel passages and the references of your reference Bible. Those same references will collate for you helpful utterances on the ethical problems of the passage. Comparatively few people know, by the way, how nearly a reference Bible allows one to dispense with the Bible dictionary, Bible index, concordance, and commentary. I am continually astonished to see how few are the questions which may be asked about a passage that the Bible itself does not answer if closely scrutinized.

“But all this is a waste of time,” you object. “In the lesson helps all of these points are stated and discussed, fully, methodically, concisely. Others have done this work for me, anticipating all my difficulties. Why need I repeat their labor?” Surely not merely to be original. There’s too much original work crying to be done to waste a moment in duplicating unnecessarily work already done for us. But the Bible study cannot be done for you. It must

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end in familiarity with the Bible, in appreciation of it, in a wide-awake understanding of the problems it presents, to be obtained in no way except by original work. If difficulties are solved before we have felt them to be difficulties, if customs and phrases are explained before we have discovered the need of an explanation, and places located before we fall to groping after them, it is the old story of "light won, light lost." And so I wish to repeat that the one proper commencement of study of a Bible lesson is the Bible, and the Bible, and the Bible; once to note our own questions, once to imagine our scholars' questions, and once, in large measure, here, there, and everywhere, concordance, index, references, and atlas at our elbow, to answer, if it may be, from the Book itself all the questions it has raised.

And when this is done, even if every question has been answered, open arms to the commentaries and the lesson helps, the wisest and richest you can find, and as many as you have time for. Why? Because twenty heads are better than one; because the Hebrew and Greek and travel and debate and experience and insight and spirituality of our best thinkers will suggest new points of view, add a world of illustration, may even upset some of your conclusions. Stand sturdily, however, in the presence of these learned doctors. You will be tempted to throw away your own honest results and adopt their wise and brilliant homilies. If you do, your class will laugh at you, or yawn. You will be giving them, not your life, but

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your rhetoric. These helps are for inspiration, not respiration and circulation. They are for hints toward originality, not hindrances. They are useful in strengthening your own thought, vivifying your own feeling, confirming your own conclusions, opening new vistas for your own exploration, suggesting methods for your own practice.

If these two lines of preparation have been faithfully carried out, you will by this time have accumulated a mass of material which will be confusing, and the third step is to reduce it to order. Long practice has convinced me of the utility of the plan of writing out questions. Whether these questions are used in the class or not, they clarify the subject marvelously, and the mere drill of writing them adds fifty per cent. to the teaching power of the instructor. When I began trying it, I was astonished to see how many thoughts which seemed to me quite promising and bright could not be approached by the interrogative mood. I wanted to lead up to this simile, that illustration, this theory, that pretty idea. I would soon find that my questions refused to lead up to them naturally. Why? Simply because these fancies answered no query likely to rise, solved no difficulty likely to suggest itself, and were mere adventitious decorations wherewith I had been accustomed to load my Sunday-school teaching, to show off.

My attempt at formulating questions soon taught me, too, that I had been indulging in monologue. I found it unexpectedly difficult to frame a question—

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one, that is, which required the scholar to do some thinking to answer. I discovered that I had been in the habit of propounding "yes" and "no" queries, merely as excuses for five-minute orations.

Then, too, when I began to put down in black and white just what I expected to put into that precious half-hour, I wondered what I had been doing with it hitherto. By my previous methods two or three little notions would keep me going through the whole thirty minutes; but ideas do shrink so when you put them on paper with a question-mark at the end! It is wonderful how many questions can be asked and answered in half an hour. I gained a new conception of the value of time, and of the teaching value of study hours.

In writing out these questions, then, the first thing to be thought of is that consideration with which a good teacher will begin his lesson, but a poor teacher will close: "What is the main teaching of the lesson?" —as important, this "main teaching," as the compass to the sailor. What particular characteristic of God's noblemen is this lesson to strengthen in my scholars? Every teacher should know the power which is given by an ultimatum; by a decision, that is, as to the one thing which, no matter what else it wins or fails to win, that lesson must accomplish. Is it to make my boys and girls more truthful, more brave, more cheery, more trusting? Whatever the point be, about that shall cluster the questions, the illustrations, the arguments. Countries, customs, times, history, shall be

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only its framework. There must be other points, to be sure, but merely as side excursions, from which we return with greater zeal to this our main quest. Those subordinate points we next determine, and the order in which we shall treat them, and then sit down to write out our questions.

Does all this seem too mechanical, this writing out questions, and determining point by point just what results you will seek, and in what order? It is businesslike; it is mechanical. Why are we so afraid of mechanism in bringing hearts to the great Mechanic, without whom was nothing made that has been made? A machine is merely a contrivance for applying power effectively, and the only question should be, Does this machinery make my aim more direct, widen and deepen the range of my efforts? It is a grand and godlike thing to be mechanical, but it is a pitifully weak thing to stop with being mechanical. Machinery accomplishes all the work that is being done anywhere, but it is machinery informed by the Holy Spirit. Our lesson preparation will be in harmony with all of God's preparing if it is orderly, painstaking, and definite, binding together, however, all its labored details with the sweet and creative spirit of prayer. Machinery touched by prayer is always the machinery in which, as in the old Greek plays, the god descends. Nothing is mechanical, everything is poetical and spiritual, that can be prayed over.

But will not all this take time—all this ransacking of the Bible, original study, writing out of questions,

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and formulating plans? Of course it will. Time is what good things are made of—time and toil. It would be strange if the best of good things, the sanctification of lives, did not take time and toil. But let us remember two facts: one, that this work, being thorough work, need not be done twice. Seven years of such Bible study as I have indicated, and what a magnificently trained teacher you will be, ready, all ready, for the next International Lesson cycle, the next Sunday-school Sabbath of years! We Sunday-school teachers have enlisted for life. It is so much wiser, then, to study for life. And in the second place, familiarity with this thoroughgoing way of working makes it much easier and more rapid than at first. We no longer have to use the concordance, but memory supplies passages needed for illustration. Bible customs are soon learned. The peculiarities of Bible language are readily mastered. The poetic instinct which sees parables and applications grows with its use until they crowd upon you and must be critically culled. Nothing ends easy but that which begins hard.

After all, however, these are the lower motives. What matters it even if the preparation for this blessed work remains hard to our last Sabbath? Let it be the best we know, and on that last Sabbath, if God has given us the knowledge that even one soul has been turned to the supreme happiness by all our toil, we shall deem it rich reward.

Chapter IV

Something about Teachers' Meetings

THE teachers' meeting is not so much to get facts as to vivify and arrange them. The leader does not teach the lesson unless he teaches how to teach the lesson. This is a place for comparison.

The meeting is perhaps less to make plans for the teachers than to stimulate them to make good plans for themselves. The gathering is not to listen to a lecture. You cannot make teachers, except by the Socratic method. A teachers' meeting is not a Bible class.

The ideal teachers' meeting focuses on the work of each the helpfulness and skill of all. The leader, then, must put into the meeting every one's peculiar talent, and must draw out from the meeting for every one's peculiar need. And do not—as so many teachers' meetings do—let the teachers for the older classes run away with the evening.

The right kind of teachers' meeting keeps itself up and keeps up the teachers. It "draws," because it

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is attractive. The only way to build up an attendance is to build up the interest of the meeting to be attended. Nevertheless, attention to a few bits of detail will greatly assist in building up the attendance. Have a constitution, a full set of officers, and stated business meetings. Make the teachers feel that they "belong." Many a teachers' meeting goes to pieces for lack of something to tie to. Cultivate the feeling of responsibility. Insist on rotation in office. Give every teacher possible some regular duty, if only to pass the hymn-books. Once a year at least let the teachers' meeting have a field day. Get up its finest programme, with a special view to interesting the entire church in Sunday-school work. Then invite the entire church to hear it. Such an open meeting should come just before the beginning of a new line of study.

The teachers' meeting, in many small places, will be a union meeting, of all the evangelical churches, and sometimes of neighboring churches in cities. What finer close to a year's harmonious work than for all the teachers of this union meeting to sit down to dinner together at a genuine love-feast!

Attendance is in many cases increased by providing a variety of leaders. The brightest of men becomes wearisome ere long; his methods grow familiar. The heart of the teachers' meeting is the programme committee, ever pumping in fresh blood. Arrange with neighboring towns for the loan or exchange of helpful leaders.

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There is a certain gain in a uniform programme for the hour, so that historical explanations, difficult exegesis, blackboard work, plans for the little folks, lesson analysis, and so on, may be taken up in a uniform order each evening. This will insure against the omission of any line of work.

Let one teacher—a new one for each quarter—be appointed to present within ten or fifteen minutes an outline of work for the younger classes. If this teacher cannot draw, an assistant should be appointed who can. The remainder of the time, after these regular exercises are over, will be at the disposal of the leader of the evening, who will treat the lesson in general. Some such combination of permanent with changing leadership will be found exceedingly helpful and attractive.

Who should lead the teachers' meeting? Teachers. Not exhorters; not conversational monopolists; not lecturers; not the most learned doctor of divinity who is not also a teacher. None of these, but teachers. The obscure layman, if he knows how to ask wise questions. No one for compliment, no one for custom, but every one for practical utility, for learning how to teach.

See that the meeting begins on time, whether the leader is ready or not, and even if no audience is present. There will be an improvement next time. Promptness begets promptness. And let the meeting close on time, though in the midst of the most interesting discussion. All the better to leave a little interest

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as a nest-egg. Open with prayer. Some teachers' meetings also open with singing. One verse is better than two.

It is useful to read the lesson text in the meeting, provided the reading is made to teach something. The manner should be varied. Let the leader request the teachers to take up the reading whenever he stops, and let him stop at eccentric places, to hold attention. Let the teachers read each verse in the King James Version, the leader responding with the Revision. In a passage where description or narrative alternates with speeches, let the leader read the speeches only, the audience inserting the narrative. Divide the lesson into sections that will analyze the thought or the story, and read these sections alternately, the leader prefacing each with a suggestive title. Divide the teachers into two portions,—right and left, front and back,—and let them read antiphonally. Let the leader read the entire lesson, injecting crisp comments carefully prepared beforehand, these comments being all in one line—exegetical, historical, explanatory of customs or of phrases. Let the leader prepare a set of questions, one to be answered by each verse, and to serve as an introduction to it as the teachers read. In studying the Gospels, whenever the lesson would be made clearer by it, read, instead of the regular text, the same passage as a monotesaron gives it, combined with all that is found in the other Gospels. Such ancient books as "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" or "The Apocryphal Gospel

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of St. Peter" may often furnish a suggestive extract to add to this opening reading.

The work of the teachers' meeting will largely be cut out for it at the outset, if the leader knows his business. Announce your programme, if you want help in carrying it out. What wonder the meeting runs off the leader's track, when the track is invisible to all but the leader! "First," says the experienced teacher, "we'll form a scheme for our guidance in study; second, we'll go over the story of the lesson in a preliminary survey; third, we'll take up the words, phrases, customs, and circumstances that need explanation; fourth, we'll discuss the best way of teaching the lesson to the younger scholars; finally, we'll bring out points for the older members of the school."

Many meetings fray out at the end. Nothing is finished, or at best there are only a few hasty answers to the stereotyped question, "Now what do you consider the chief teachings of this lesson?" If it has not been made evident before the meeting was half through what are the chief teachings of that lesson, it surely will not be made evident by this hurried question, whose answers are punctuated by the donning of overcoats. If the leader began with a good outline, now is the time to clinch the discussions of the evening by repeating the outline, enlarged and modified as those discussions may have required. Then let the evening be closed reverently with a few words of earnest prayer.

As to the general conduct of the meeting, probably

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the matter most necessary to be urged is the use of direct, brisk, suggestive questions, addressed, not to empty space, but to particular teachers. A question spread over a roomful is about as efficient as a bullet would be if fired flat enough to cover ten men. Don't be afraid to use proper names. Questions addressed to a crowd put a premium on forwardness. Call no one by name who is really too bashful to reply, but teachers ought to pass by that stage of timidity.

A second common mistake is to run the teachers' meeting on the low plane of mere facts, history, biography, when it should be all aglow with the spiritual life. If the teachers' meeting does not touch the teachers' consciences, hardly will those teachers touch the consciences of their scholars. Let the leader ask at every turn this question in effect: "What need of your scholars' lives will this truth fit?" And he should not rest satisfied until the truth is applied in turn to the diverse needs of three classes—the little folks, the young folks, and the old folks.

The leader must put himself in the place of all kinds of teachers, and discern their needs. He must head off unseemly and prolonged discussions; he must have sprightliness to keep the meeting taut; he must have zeal to keep the meeting warm; he must have consecration to keep the meeting spiritual.

But the best of leaders may be thwarted by poor following. To be led in a teachers' meeting is an art almost as difficult as to lead. A skilful follower in a teachers' meeting will answer questions briefly. He

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will not commit the impertinence of giving ten times as much as is asked for from him, thus stealing from the meeting the sprightliness of nine questions and answers, even when all he says is to the point. He will make suggestive answers rather than exhaustive ones. His eager note-book and intelligent listening will be as encouraging as a continuous round of applause. In short, he will be anxious to do anything for the success of the meeting, even to the extent of sitting silent for fifteen minutes. And all leaders will bless him.

Chapter V

A Teacher with a Schedule

THE weak point in the preparation most Sunday-school teachers make is their failure to prepare a schedule for their teaching—the order, that is, in which they shall take up and discuss the facts and lessons of the day's Scripture. Probably the majority of teachers begin with verse 1 and go stolidly through to verse 13, or as near it as the superintendent will permit them to get. This is teaching with a shovel, and not with a sieve.

Wise teaching selects, marshals, brings to a focus. It excels haphazard teaching as far as a painting by Rembrandt excels a whitewashed fence. It does not permit ideas to neutralize each other. It has a purpose, clearly and determinedly held in view, and to this purpose it subordinates everything else. It knows that the effectiveness of the lesson depends quite as much on what is left out as on what is put in.

Now the more ideas a teacher has, the greater need has he of a schedule, just as the railroad that runs

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most trains is in most need of a good time-table. Indeed, the performance of a teacher without a plan bears a strong resemblance to a railway collision. Ideas, illustrations, exhortations, bump into one another front and rear, telescope each other, and form at the end of the hour a disheartening mass of splintered fragments, with here and there a jet of steam or a puff of smoke. If the teacher has no schedule, the scholars on his lesson train will grow confused and get nowhere. Small blame to them!

Imitating Paul, the wise teacher will take for his motto, "This *one* thing I teach." He will teach as much more as is possible, but first he will make absolutely sure of one thing. My own plan in connection with every lesson is to lay down one principal, and two or three subordinates. It is best to write these down on the margin of the quarterly, in precisely the order in which they are to be taken up. Ask yourself most earnestly, "What is the main lesson this Scripture is to teach my scholars?" Having decided on that, consider your teaching a success, whatever happens, if it has impressed this one truth. Leap to this task as swiftly as may be, even if to reach the chosen point you must pass hastily over the first portion of the lesson.

After driving home this truth, and making sure of it, take up in turn your subordinates. This will require a new view of the lesson story that will compensate for your previous haste. And reserve some time at the end of the lesson for a few parting words

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on your main truth. Save for this time your most telling illustration, your most ardent pleading. In preparation for this get all questions and difficulties out of the way. Be sure, before you begin, that your watch is with the superintendent's, and do not permit yourself to be caught by the closing bell with your lesson only half way to the terminus.

Some teachers are proud thus to be caught, but they should be ashamed. If their neighbor admits that he got over the lesson with his class, they are filled with amazed pity at his lack of brains. "Why, how *could* you? There was so much in the lesson that I scarcely made a beginning."

Teachers, it is a disgrace to any workman to leave behind him an improperly finished job; and we are, or should be, just as thorough workmen as any carpenter. *Select!* One truth a Sunday means fifty-two truths a year, while fifty-two truths a Sunday would not mean one truth a year. *Plan!* Definite results do not come from haphazard methods. *Finish!* One goal reached is greater triumph than fifty goals started for. *Form a schedule, and carry it out!*

Chapter VI

My Lesson Chart

My recipe for a well-prepared lesson is expressed in Captain Cuttle's formula: "Make a note on 't.'"

I have read the lesson text, and the text before the lesson text and after it. I have read the wisest commentaries I can find, and as many of them as I can find time for. I have "mulled" over the matter for myself a day or two. By this time my brain is thronged with facts and a-tingle with suggestions.

Then, the lesson leaf or some other convenient copy of the lesson text before me, I construct the chart by which to make my Sabbath cruise.

First, one must get out to sea; there is the introduction. How shall I fit this trip in with last Sabbath's voyage, and how shall I get under way?

As I plan my introductory questions, I write at the head of the lesson text some word to represent each question, such as "author?" "time?" "place?" "circumstances?" "purpose?" "outline?"

With the questions concerning the text itself, how-

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ever, I do no writing; I simply underscore neatly those words or phrases of the text that will hint at the point to be raised. For example, take the verse, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," and the questions: (1) How was this imagery prompted by David's life? (2) What use did our Lord make of the same simile? (3) What comfort should we get from this thought in the trials and uncertainties of life? (4) How does Christ's shepherding keep us from want? (5) From what kind of want does it keep us? (6) What makes you sure of this? (7) How was all this proved true in David's case?

As each question occurs to me, or is suggested by my reading, I underscore a word that henceforth stands for that question. These words, in the order of the questions, are: (1) "shepherd"; (2) "Lord"; (3) "my"; (4) a curved line from "shepherd" to "I" connecting the two sentences; (5) "want"; (6) "shall not"; (7) "I."

It will sometimes need a little thought to decide just which word will best represent the question, but that very thought will fix the question more firmly in the mind. If more than one question should be attached to one word, make two short underscorings, one beside the other.

When the question contrasts two persons, two expressions, or two events, "railroading" is in order—a line, that is, drawn clear across the printed page, connecting the words which the question connects.

If you have a parallel Bible, or some lesson help

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that gives the King James and the Revised versions in opposite columns, it is an excellent plan to mark in one version all the points of history, geography, biography, customs, dates, and the like, and in the other the points requiring practical application to heart and life. The latter will obviously go best in the Revised Version. The points indicated by the underscorings in the King James Version may first be considered and got out of the way.

If, however, you must use only the Authorized Version, distinguish in some manner between the two sets of points—the merely explanatory and the hortatory. Use black ink for the first and red ink for the second, or a straight line for the one and a wavy line for the other, or for the first a single and for the second a double underscore.

Proceeding in this way, I soon have a line under every word requiring explanation, every hint of a strange custom, every reference to other parts of the Scriptures, every point for practical application. I have underscored words representative of all the thoughts that especially appeal to me as fitting the needs of my class.

When this has been done, it is time to make my outline. If my study has suggested to me an outline of my own, that will be better for me than any other man's. The outline is the plan of campaign, the thing I wish especially to emphasize, and under it, ranged in order, the points of minor importance. I write this outline on the margin of my lesson text.

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Having decided on the outline, I go over my underscorings again, doubly or trebly underscoring the words that have reference to the thought around which I intend to center the entire lesson—the thought that is to be the lesson's enduring monument in the minds and lives of my scholars.

Now I am ready for review. I go over the whole, starting with the detached words jotted down at the beginning,—“author,” “time,” “place,” etc.,—and consider all the underscorings, railroadings, and curved lines, stopping at each to frame a question of my own and to make sure of my best answer. I do this in precisely the order in which I intend to take up these points in the class. Not the smallest part of my work at this juncture is to simplify, by erasing the underscorings where the questions may be spared without interfering with my main purpose; and then I review once more in the same way, to confirm my grasp on the lesson plan.

By this time every underscoring is luminous, and my page of lesson text has become a graphic picture of the lesson I am to teach, a true chart for my voyage.

Do you think the process too tedious, brother teacher? It is not a whit too thorough when you remember the infinite interests involved; and every repetition of it will increase your skill, and the rapidity of your work. I have used this method for years, with various classes, and know it to be practical, pleasant, and profitable. Try it, and see.

Chapter VII

The Value of a Monotessaron

FAR above concordance, Bible index, Bible dictionary, commentary, I count the monotessaron the very best help to Bible study. The monotessaron, it might be parenthetically remarked for the benefit of the lexicon-lazy folk, is a harmony of the four Gospels, so arranged as to make one continuous and complete story, in Scripture words alone.

“Fie!” says one reviewer of a recent monotessaron, “we have no use for such compilations. God gave us the gospel in four separate books. He could have put it in one if it had been best that way.” This is an argument which would make a heretic of the locomotive, printing-press, and any other rearrangement of God-given matter. Having the four Gospels, we may have one. If God had given us only one, we could not have the four.

Christians will always read the four separate Gospels, in order to see Christ from four separate points of view, through four separate individualities, that

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their differences as well as their agreements may make the picture stand out more vividly, much as the two diverse flat portions of a stereoscope view combine into perfect perspective and reality.

But this combining is necessary; and it may be truly said that what we lose, in reading the monotessaron, of the personality of John or Luke, we more than gain in the increased vividness of the person of Christ. Speaking for one, I may say that through my first acquaintance with a monotessaron that matchless life has shone upon me with an entire splendor of beauty and majesty before unimagined.

Never before was the life a whole, like Washington's or Lincoln's. The imprisonment of John was an event in the fourteenth chapter of one Gospel, the sixth of another, the third of the rest; the call of Matthew now in the ninth chapter, now the second, now the fifth; the parable of the sower in the thirteenth, fourth, and eighth chapters. Nothing was in a clear, definite relation to the single life. The talk with Nicodemus is now no longer to me an event of John 3, but of the beginning of the first year of Christ's ministry, at the Passover. No longer would I be puzzled to tell which came first, the healing of the nobleman's son of John 4, or the stilling of the tempest of Mark 4, but place the last a year later.

Not only has the narrative become clear and orderly, not only has the wonderful history parted itself into the true and helpful time-divisions so diverse from the confusing chapters, but the places

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now stand out, and journeys are distinct. Take any diatessaron—that is, any parallel arrangement of the four Gospels—and note the wide blanks in each book, filled out by others, so that between contiguous verses of one Gospel must be inserted whole chapters of another, complete journeys, many deeds and sayings, the location in the meantime greatly changing. A geologist will think of the helpful triumph of taking from the full rock record here to fill out the unconfortable strata there, until a geological column is built up.

A further inestimable advantage is the appreciation of surroundings. What light is cast, for example, on the story of Lazarus in John by its insertion in Luke! The contact of these parted elements of the gospel story sometimes rouses a current of thrilling thoughts, making a veritable electric battery of the monotessaron.

Still another priceless gain is an understanding of proportions. Matthew's parallels, Mark's deeds, Luke's miracles and parables, John's sermons—in reading any of the four Gospels peculiar elements come into prominence, and we are left with no idea of the relative proportion of these elements in the one life. What emphasis did Christ place on the doctrinal, and what on the practical? Just how much of his teaching concerned himself and his character? What space in the New Testament is occupied by miracles? Just what part of Christ's preaching was parabolic? What is the prominence of missionary effort and proselytism? How much is there of con-

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solution, and how much of stern rebuke? What measure of promise? What quantum of theology? What share of ethics?

These and scores of other questions which occur at once to every Christian thinker, the monotessarou makes possible of easy and rapid answer. Indeed, almost its chief advantage is the spur it affords to the spirit of investigation. Those who are statistically inclined can even get at precise ratios by the exact process of counting lines.

Well, that is my experience of the value of a monotessarou. It has given the life and person of Christ marvelous vividness, setting facts in their due order, location, relations, and proportions, while the facility it affords is constant inspiration to fresh, delightful study. This is the experience of thousands, and yet I am sure that among the readers of this book will be many who are yet unacquainted with this Bible help. Not only every Sunday-school teacher, but every Bible scholar, should own one.

The single year in which I wrote this chapter saw the publication, in quick succession, of four of these monotessarous, one the improved edition of an older work. Each of these four has its peculiar features of value, and I have compared them carefully to get at their characteristics.

1. "The Interwoven Gospels." Rev. William Pittenger. (5 × 7½ inches, pp. 245. New York: John B. Alden. Price, 90 cents.) Five plates give clearly the various journeys. The Gospel fullest in each event is taken as the standard, and its

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verse-numberings given, while sentences and phrases interwoven from other Gospels are preceded by an inconspicuous letter, to designate the book from which they come. This seems to me the ideal plan. There is a table for finding in the monotessaron any verse of any Gospel. There is a very distinct synopsis. The time is indicated only at the heads of the five divisions of the story. The place is given at the head of each one of the one hundred and seventy-one sections. The index is scant. The typography is excellent. The American Revised Version is used.

2. "The Gospel Commentary." J. R. Gilmore ("Edmund Kirke") and Lyman Abbott, D.D. (5 × 7 inches, pp. 840. New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert. Price, \$1.50.) This monotessaron is combined with an excellent and very full commentary, selected from the works of three hundred authors. These multitudinous notes somewhat mar the impression of unity and continuity for which the monotessaron is peculiarly valued. No maps. Information as to sources of the combined text is given only by references at the top of the page—an indefinite way. There is a table for finding in the monotessaron any verse of any Gospel. There is a chronological synopsis, but no diatessaron table. There is a good index of thirty-two pages, and a marginal synopsis. The time is minutely indicated at the head of each page, and the locations shown irregularly, in notes, chapter headings, or marginal synopsis. There are forty-three chapters. The typography is clear. The King James Version is mainly used.

3. "The Fourfold Gospel." J. G. Butler, D.D. (5 × 7½ inches, pp. 212. New York: Funk & Wagnalls. Price, 75 cents.) This is taken from Butler's "Bible Work." The sources of the text and transitions are indicated as in Pittenger's, but not quite so minutely. Places are given at the head of the one hundred and sixty-six sections. Times not shown. A good diatessaron synopsis, and a table to find in the monotessaron any verse from any Gospel. Two sketch-maps. No index whatever. King James Version.

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4. "The One Gospel." A. T. Pierson, D.D. (5 × 7½ inches, pp. 203. New York: The Baker & Taylor Company. Price, 75 cents.) This monotessaron contains the gospel story in forty-seven sections, with no section headings, and no indications whatever of times, places, or sources of the various portions of the text. Valuable for reading, but unsatisfactory for study. A capital index. No table for finding verses, no synopsis or maps. King James Version. Retains more than the others nearly equivalent words and phrases.

Each of these excellent compilations has its own field, and the student who can afford the luxury will rejoice in them all. Happy times in which we live, wherein the person of Christ is brought with such clearness and fullness and beauty as never before to the poorest and busiest and most unlearned!

Chapter VIII

Getting Attention

I WAS once sergeant of a college military company that was being trained by an officer of the regular army from the nearest barracks. In one evolution it was made my duty to march at the head of a long column, shouting at the top of my voice: "Hep—hep—hep!" This was to give the time; we had no drum. I conscientiously obeyed orders and strutted off, shouting the required "Hep—hep—hep—hep!" But alas! at a critical turn, thinking more of my glory than of my duty, I marched to the right, while the column, more heedful, turned off to the left. So there I was, a long, lank figure, strutting off by myself over the field, shouting "Hep—hep—hep!" How many times since, when standing before inattentive classes, have I repeated that mortifying performance, less obviously, but none the less really!

How often teachers are bent on planning what they are to say and how they are to say it, but omit to consider how they may induce people to attend to it;

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just as if (to change the figure) a locomotive engineer should polish and oil his engine and turn on full steam, but forget the little coupling-pin that hitches the engine to the train! It is a very little thing, this coupling-pin of attention, and often the teacher goes puffing a long way before he perceives that it is left out; and it is a great humiliation, as well as a great loss of time and steam, to go back and hitch on.

The first thing to be considered, if we would win attention, is the room. Poor janitors spoil more Sunday-schools than poor teachers. You remember how the Peterkins tried to take their drive, shaking the reins, clucking at the stationary horse, whipping and coaxing him by turns, and all in vain until the lady from Philadelphia *unhitched* the obstinate beast. We make Peterkins of ourselves every time we try to take an intellectual journey with our pupils when they are tied down by hot air, poor ventilation, uncomfortable seats, and surrounding noise and bustle. All our pedagogical ingenuity will fight in vain against the fiendish ingenuity of a bad janitor.

Having made it possible for the children to pay any attention at all, the next thing is to get it. Attention has something to do with tension. Now it takes two to stretch a cord, and there are two parties to every act of attention. How about the second party in this case—the children?

Imprimis, when you appear before the children, leap at once into your theme. Older folks rather like to doze along through the preliminaries of a speech,

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economically saving their enthusiasm for the end, if not for next time ; but the attention of children is lost or won for good by the opening sentences. Our sharp boys and girls discover very quickly whether a veteran or a raw recruit is calling "Attention!"

There are some beginnings which are sure to offend them. There is the bagpipe beginning—the long, droning prelude, which advertises a teacher set out on a mud-turtle to catch these lively colts. There is the jack-in-the-box prelude: "Eh! Now, children! What's lesson 'bout? Quick!" There is the crape-dirge beginning, which solemnly hopes the children have studied their lesson and will recite better than they did last Sunday. There is the plead-guilty beginning: "You'll have to teach me to-day, children. I've been unable to look at the lesson."

But it is by no means easy to give affirmative rules. The best of beginnings, if stereotyped, becomes inefficient. No general can plan a campaign in advance. And yet a general must understand the art of war, and a teacher must study his tactics.

In the first place, attention is won partly by position and attitude. Happy the teacher whose class is a semicircle, himself at the center! And luckless the teacher whose class, fixed on straight, fastened pews, sees past him the distracting background of a crowded, bustling school! He struggles against strong odds.

But whatever may be the position of the class, any one can see that his own attitude shall command attention. Let him be straight, alert, confident, quiet

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—not flabby, nervous, and diffident. Let his face and voice and bearing expect attention, and he will get it.

The opening sentences must be businesslike. There must be no indecision, no “puttering.” The teacher must leap at once to that hand-to-hand combat with the theme which tells his scholars that there's purpose in it. The opening sentences may sometimes best catch the class by directly addressing one person in it, the most restless, indifferent one, and nailing *him*.

A paradox is good to begin with, some statement of the lesson theme so startling as to spur to discussion, possibly to opposition. Then the next Sunday, perhaps a quiet picture of the historical setting of the story, or a description of the landscape surrounding the event, or a compact review of the last lesson. Then the next day you might begin with a bit of personal experience bearing on the matter in hand. Nothing wins attention better than the first person singular. Or your introduction might be a whiff of fun, for which the youngsters are so eager that the most witless piece of jollity, if it spring from a merry heart, is certain to reach theirs.

You are sure of their attention if you can get them to do something for you—open their Bibles, repeat something in concert, find a verse, or look at something. For this purpose maps, diagrams, pictures, all material objects connected with the lesson, are invaluable. Scholars yield their wills to yours through their

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hands or their eyes more readily than through their ears.

And none of this must be done with manifest purpose. Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird. Woe to the teacher who shouts the word "Attention!" He will get nothing but the echo of the word from stony cliffs of indifference.

And finally, woe to the teacher who relies at bottom on any skill of his own to draw young hearts to his teaching; whose main dependence is anything but the attention-winning power of that incarnate Sympathy and Love who promised to draw all men—and children—to himself.

Chapter IX

Keeping Attention

WE are likely to think that the attention of children is hard to get; but the very opposite is true. The minds of children, like their tongues, are hung in the middle. It is the easiest thing in the world to turn them in any direction. No teacher need spend much force on his introduction. Merely appear and begin to talk—that is enough. A fresh voice and presence and a new theme will draw all eyes and all hearts. If grown people are your audience, the situation is somewhat reversed. They are the heavy weights—hard to move, but just as hard to stop. An attention-forcing prelude will hold them attentive to a good half-hour of platitudes.

The teacher of children, however, flattered by the eager listening given at the start, is likely to relax his efforts and deem the crown of the children's interest already attained. But alas! soon here a little tot wriggles, and there another whispers, and yonder a third giggles, and now a fourth turns around to see

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what's up, and the teacher might as well be talking to a school of young fishes.

Demosthenes once said that if whatever a man got he took care to keep, he was grateful to the gods; but if he spent it, he spent with it all his gratitude. How many teachers are so prodigal of the attention given at the beginning that toward the close, dismayed at the listlessness, they forget ungratefully their initial capital of bright eyes and eager ears! There are many ways of squandering this attention capital. We may waste it on those long exhortations so very valuable (when omitted), on side issues, on quibbles. We may choke it with dullness, drive it off with scolding.

The only way always to keep attention is always to be expecting to lose it. Be prompt to note signs of its vanishing in drooping eyelids, wandering gaze, jerking in the seat, uncertain answers. The teacher whose ingenuity can always recall stray-away minds need fear few other recitation problems. How to do it?

The best provocative of attention is variety. The skilled teacher brings as many suits of manner to the class as the bulkiest clown wears costumes to the circus. Before one suit becomes wearisome he strips it off, and presto! a fresh teacher before the wide-eyed children. If he has been sitting, he rises; if erect, he leans eagerly forward. His utterance becomes rapid from slow, impetuous from drawling. He darts from generalizations into personalities. If motionless be-

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fore, he begins to gesticulate. This is acting? No. It is only doing what the facile children themselves do on their kaleidoscopic playground, where no one goes to sleep.

Again, a teacher must learn to emphasize his important points, not by enlarging on them, but by reverting to them. Slight impression on a wall by holding a battering-ram against it! Nor can you impress a child's mind by holding a fact up against it. It is intervals which make blows possible.

So the child will attend to two things or three better than to one. Concentrate on one matter, burning-glass fashion, but only while the sun of interest is shining. With the first mist of indifference the wise teacher will drop the burning-glass. More teachers fail from having too few points to make than from having too many.

But to retain attention, you need less to multiply points than points of view. A teacher can usually fix the attention of his class upon one subject while using in succession six different methods of treatment. Passing swiftly from questioning to formulating principles and illustrating them, from Bible quotations to personal experiences and exhortations, he will hold his audience delighted, though a single method would have wearied it. Note how a skilled cook presents the Thanksgiving turkey on different days. It is a lordly brown biped, a plateful of nice slices, a salad, a pot-pie, hash. Teachers will be able to hold the

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youngsters' attention as well as cooks, if they learn thus to put things in different lights.

Furthermore, let it be remembered that no one was ever dignified with a child, and won its attention. And some teachers are too staid to be useful. Startle into inattention by a smart slap of the hands together, sharp extension of the finger, abrupt turns upon the floor. Preachers use such artifices when pews grow somnolent, and why not teachers? Never forget that the slightest inanimate object wins attention better than the greatest animation of the teacher. A pencil-tablet will rivet all eyes. A finger laid upon a map is cynosure for the most fidgety scholars. If you have a picture which can be brought into connection with the lesson, it is a pedagogical sin to omit it. A chart is as necessary to the Sabbath-school teacher as to the sailor, albeit the teacher's is best home-made. I used to hesitate to take time to use such helps; but I found that the poorest picture did better work than my most vivid word-paintings, and that my clearest statement was inefficient beside the clumsiest diagram.

The beginner in this fine art of attention-holding is likely to derive the word "attention" thus: from *teneo*, "I hold," *ad*, "on to"; *attention*, "I hold on to" him. He tries to hold attention, therefore, by main strength. He grapples with his audience as a bulldog would. His nerves are tense. His voice is imperative. His eye glares. He is rapid, impetuous, strategic. This is power, he thinks, and this is skill;

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but his audience astonishes him by going to sleep. Abashed, he tries milder means of holding on to them. He begins to buttonhole his audience. He uses soft and flattering tones. He coaxes. He wheedles. He jokes. He chucks them under the chin. And then his audience gets up and goes out.

The real meaning of the word "attention" contains an invaluable hint for all who are trying to win others by speaking or teaching. It is *teneo*, "I hold, I stretch," *ad*, "toward"; and it is not by any means applied to the speaker, but to the listener. To get your audience, whether of little folk or big folk, to stretch out toward the same goal of truth that you are seeking is the true art of winning attention.

This understanding of the matter implies that the teacher also is really in pursuit of truth himself. The failure of much teaching is because it cries "Go on" instead of "Come on." The speaker that you follow with most difficulty is the speaker who has the air of "knowing it all," while the speaker who succeeds best in holding your attention gives you the impression of a chase.

There's the game before you—that elusive truth slipping away through the thicket yonder. The huntsman's eye flashes. He whistles up the dogs. We all leap to the saddles. Off we go, over upland and vale, swamp and rock, fence and ditch, our leader far in the van, pointing here, waving there, and hallooing the huntsman on. And when the game is tracked down, and our leader stands above it, drip-

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ping knife in hand, our veins tingle with his, and we shout with delight at our triumph.

This is the first principle in the art of winning attention. The speaker must give the impression of a truth-seeker, if he would win others to seek truth with him. What Edward Everett Hale once said of a sermon applies to this. Every Sunday-school lesson should start out to prove something. It should have some goal. It should *intend* something. *Intention* must precede *attention*.

But though there must be this element of pleasing uncertainty and suspense, we all have difficulty in attending to a speaker who does not appear to have himself well in hand or to be quite sure what he is about. Have you not caught yourselves, teachers, talking as if in your sleep? Have you not sometimes waked up at the end of a sentence, a question, or a harangue, and wondered what you had been talking about? Did you suppose that any one else knew? Did you expect to hold on to them when you had no grasp of the subject? Can listeners pay attention to any one who does not pay attention to himself?

Teachers make the mistake of dividing attention between the class, to watch that they hear; and themselves, to see how they are getting along; and the little attention left goes to the theme. Not unnaturally, the attention of the class is divided in the same way—much to themselves, less to the teacher, and least of all to what is being taught. Of course it is a teacher's business to hold his scholars' attention, but he will

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never do it by worrying and wondering whether he is succeeding.

Nay, I even go so far as to say, if one of your pupils pays no attention, then pay no attention to him, provided the mischief is not spreading. A teacher should not fritter away his attention on inattentive pupils. If he cannot win their attention by his own interest in his theme, he cannot win it at all. Not that I would imply for a moment, however, that the teacher is to rest satisfied while a single one of his pupils remains inattentive. If your chicks are average chicks they are gregarious, and one stray-away is enough to carry the whole flock with him into foreign parts. While you have a single inattentive scholar you should conduct your lesson with a view to holding him. You will hold the rest then, as a matter of course. I am only speaking of the best way to win attention. It must be won, or you are beaten to some extent; and the attention of all *will* be won in the end if you are deeply enough in earnest yourself, if you do not allow your attention to be side-tracked by the inattention of a few. If you wish to win and hold the attention of others, *win and hold your own.*

Chapter X

The Importance of Questioning

EVER since Socrates, conversation has been the soul of teaching, and ever since Adam and Eve the question has been the life of conversation. A teacher's success depends, in about equal measure, upon inspiration, cogitation, and interrogation. Let the first be the great gravitative forces; let the second provide the truth, the liquid; then the interrogation-point is the curved siphon, which transfers from the full to the empty vessel!

Many, many a teacher has failed, thinking himself not wise enough, or not energetic enough, while in reality he has simply failed to be wisely and energetically quizzical.

But what is a question? Is it not a fish-hook for pulling out, rather than a siphon for putting in? Yes, later; but you cannot fish successfully in a dry pond. Any bungler can examine and test. The nice art is to use your interrogation-points as instruments of addition, rather than of subtraction.

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But why is it often better to insinuate instruction through a question, in preference to pouring by direct harangue? Well, does not a question imply community of interest, and hint at equality or similarity of attainment? The question is neighborly; the discourse mounts a platform.

The helpful lesson commentaries fail, practically, to reach many a class, because its teacher in reading has failed to translate from the declarative into the interrogative. If Doctor Somebody writes tersely, "A sin that is born of your own will is tenfold more dangerous to you than your own sin that is born of your neighbor's will," Johnny will not get the point unless the teacher transforms it somewhat thus: "If you are out in the country all alone, Johnny, jump over a fence, steal a pocketful of apples, is that a sin just as much as if some other boy should be along and persuade you to do it? Yes? Well, now, which sin is the more dangerous to you?"

So important does this seem to me that I always carry pencil and paper to the perusal of my lesson helps, and write out, as a point pleases me, the form in which I wish to bring it up in the class, ranging these questions under the numbers of the verses to which they apply.

The teacher who does not write out his questions, or do the equivalent of that work, is as sure to be defeated as the general who fights without a plan of campaign.

Should those questions be read in the class? Not

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unless your ideal of teaching is the company drill, instead of the conversation.

It is well, however, to ask the scholars to write out questions for you on verses assigned, and read these questions before the class. The teacher's work is grandly accomplished when he has induced the scholar to ask his own questions, and work out his own answers.

I often find that a general call for questions on some apparently exhausted topic brings the richest results of the half-hour.

Few verses are completely treated without Lyman Beecher's "snapper,"—the appeal to experience. The question, "Is it I?" must be raised, no matter by how direct urgings, in every heart. That question is truth's barb.

There is a questioning face and attitude, indicative of a real and personal interest in the thing considered, without which a question will always fall dead, and deservedly.

Nor, on the contrary, will a live manner avail to foist upon the attention of a class a dead question. And a question is "dead" to your scholar which does not touch his own world of interest at some point, no matter how close connection it may have with your life and experience.

The questions on the lesson leaves make a good aid in study, but do most pitifully convict a teacher of unfaithfulness if he use them in teaching.

Most genuine of all questions, and most likely to

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be helpful, are the doubts, perplexities, and difficulties which attend a thoughtful teacher's first careful reading of the text itself. Then is the time when the cream of that lesson should rise.

Leading questions are always better than harangue, and are not to be despised, on a pinch. See what use Socrates made of them! And, by the way, modern teachers could learn much as to methods from the dialogues of that old pagan.

By all means we must learn to link our questions, naturally developing one from the other. Read a page of miscellaneous proverbs, and you will carry away from it the same bewildered brain much Sunday-school sharp-shooting produces. Use the solid phalanx!

Infinite harm is done our teaching by "questioning down." Do you know how tiresome it is to talk to a man up in a third-story window, you in the street? Our "level-best" teaching must be on a level.

The novice at questioning, when first he becomes well satisfied with himself in this line, will probably be making his chief mistake,— will have hit upon an interrogative phraseology in which his thoughts run easily, which he uses incessantly. The artful questioner will rack his brains to the utmost stretch of ingenuity to devise striking and novel ways of quizzing, to hold the restless young minds.

Of course, no skilled questioner will take the class in order. Of course, he will name the person who is to answer, at the end, and not at the beginning, of his

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question. Of course, he will understand the use of long and attention-holding questions, interspersed with short, quick, attention-exciting questions. Of course, he will be ready with a varying form of the question if he has to repeat it, lest the class fail to listen the second time. Of course, he will train himself to become ready with a "catch" question,—a question with a quirk in it, to punish mildly the inattentive. Of course, he will know when the class needs unifying by the general question addressed to all, and when the subject needs unifying by the general question reviewing all. And, of course, he will have learned that the best teacher of this, as of all arts, is He whose boyish questions in the temple grew to such mighty answers that no man thereafter dared question him, save only his true disciples.

Chapter XI

A Good Question

IF I were asked to name the chief fault of the average teacher, I should say, "Asking questions that can be answered by 'Yes' and 'No.'" Among my acquaintances was once a teacher in a secular school whose method of questioning was invariably this. He would have before him the statements of the text-book, copied out with painstaking care, and would develop the subject thus: "Is it true or is it not true, Mr. A——, that"—and here would follow the statement or definition of the text-book. The ambiguous answer, "Yes," was amply satisfactory. Unfortunately, when such teachers gain a foothold in the Sunday-school, they are not so easily dismissed as from secular establishments.

Now, a good question merely furnishes the starting-point, and pushes the scholar out along the course toward some goal of truth; but in a question that can be answered by "Yes" or "No" the teacher himself ambles amiably up the track, and condescendingly

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allows the scholar's monosyllable to pat him on the head after he himself has reached the goal. A question that can be answered by "Yes" or "No" merely formulates the truth as it exists in the teacher's mind, and invites the scholar's assent to it; a good question, on the contrary, provokes the scholar to formulate truth for himself.

Now, it is much easier to express what we see to be true than to get any one else to express original thought. There is also, to the unwise, more glory in laying down principles to which others must agree than in getting others to lay down principles to which we must agree. It will always be true, therefore, that the lazy and the pompous will have no aim beyond educating monosyllabic answers. Most teachers, however, are earnestly desirous of the best, but do not know how to frame wise questions. What must be said to them?

First, that they must not go to school before their scholars. Expert questioning is not learned in the class-room, but in the study. A lead-pencil is the best teacher. A sheet of paper is the best drill-ground. As I have urged before: Let the Sunday-school worker who aspires to the high praise of a good questioner sit down persistently, after studying the lesson, and write out a set of questions. Nay; on each point, so far as he has time, let him write several questions, criticise them, fancy what kind of answer each will be likely to elicit from the scholar, and choose what appears the best question. Try

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it on the class, and learn valuable lessons from the result.

This method, laborious as it is, must be kept up until skilful questioning has become instinctive. That there may be hope of this happy result, by the way, the written questions must never be used in the class,—only the memory of them, and the drill the preparation has given. It surely will happen, sooner or later, that the careful student of practical pedagogics will be able to get along without writing, merely formulating fit questions in his mind as he studies the lesson. After a time he may dispense even with this, and look simply after the points to be presented, trusting to extemporaneous question-making.

Not wholly, however. The best questioner in the world gets into ruts. The best forms of questions ever invented are worse than the worst if they are used with dull reiteration. No one can devote careful attention to the form of his questions without falling in love with some particular way of questioning; and this will not always be the best way, but will probably be the most original way. A form of question that is irreproachable the first time will be unendurable used six times in succession. It is necessary, then, even for the trained questioner, to revert now and then to his old lead-pencil drill, in order to study variety.

But how may the uninitiated know a good question when they see it, or make it? As said already, it must not be such that a lazy monosyllable may an-

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swer it. As said already, too, if one is in doubt, he has but to try it on the class, and note results. But further. A good question will be likely to have something piquant about it, if the subject admits. For instance, "James was killed, Peter was freed; why was that?" is better than saying, "How do you account for the fact that while the apostle James was beheaded, the apostle Peter was delivered from the hands of his persecutors?"

Furthermore, the difference between a poor question and a good one may often be a mere matter of length. "Why did the Christians at Antioch keep the inferior leaders for work in the city, but send away the most prominent men in their church to labor as missionaries?" That is abominable; it should be, "Why did the Antioch Christians send away their best men?"

A good question will contain as much as possible of the personal element. "What do you understand by the phrase 'remission of sins'?" is much better than "What is the significance of the phrase 'remission of sins'?" Because the personal question puts the expected answer in a more modest light, the answer will be more unconstrained and full.

And, by the way, there are few forms of questions more zealously to be avoided than the form I have just used, "What do you understand by—?" It is the unfailing resource of the poor questioner. A verse will be read, a phrase quoted, a doctrine or a principle named, and then will follow, as the night

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the day, the tiresome old formula, "What do you understand by this, Miss A——?" One would be quite safe in declaring, at any particular instant during common Sunday-school hours, that one-fourth of the Sunday-school teachers of the world were repeating, with united breath, that Methuselah of a query, "What do you understand by this?"

Again, a good question must be swift. It must come so quickly that there will be no time to get out of the way. Some questions that, if written out, would not be bad, are prolonged in the utterance of over-deliberate teachers like foggy illustrations of the law of perspective. Good questions leap. You feel their buoyancy as you read them or hear them. It is like the huntsman springing into the saddle and shouting, "Come on!" No one with an atom of thoughtfulness is dull to the exhilaration of spirited questions. They have inspired all the wise thinking of the world.

And, finally, good questions should be absolutely clear. There is one thing in the world that must always be faultlessly perspicuous and distinct, and that is a marching order in time of battle. Now, questions are the marching orders of our scholars' brain regiments, in a battle of infinite moment. Let them ring clearly as ever bugle-call was sounded. Questions mumbled, hesitant, caught up and patched over, confused and slovenly,—what wonder if these get slow and mumbled answers? A question clearly put, not only proves that the questioner has clear

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ideas, but it wondrously clarifies the ideas of the answerer.

Good questions, then, are thought-compelling, varied, short, personal, piquant, unhackneyed, brisk, and clear. Do I ask too much? Nothing that all may not acquire, if but a tithe of the zeal and labor claimed by the trivialities of a few years are spent upon these issues of eternity. Let every teacher consider what characteristics of a good questioner he may add to his pedagogical outfit.

Chapter XII

Inspiring Questions

I USE this title advisedly, because I believe that it requires more genuine inspiration to lead the average scholar to ask questions than to perform any other part of the teacher's difficult task. How easy to ask our own questions, to put in our own answers in order to draw them out again, were that all of it! But to transform the passive into the active, the auditor into the investigator, the questioned into the questioner, that is the goal of the true teacher's endeavor.

Shall we count a recitation successful when the teacher has been earnest and zealous in his inquisition, the scholars ready and full in their responses? A single question, borne, it may be, on a voice so timid that it is scarcely audible in the buzzing room, yet sprung from some young heart just moved with the sudden desire of truth, is worth all the rest.

If the teacher wishes to carry his scholars beyond the parasite stage, which is just as dangerous intellectually as physically, both to the parasite and its sup-

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porter, he must learn first that this weaning comes not without thoughtfulness and design. He must learn that, even more carefully than he plans the questions he is to ask his scholars, he must plan to inspire them to ask questions themselves. He will be most successful if, from the many matters which could be brought up in the lesson, he selects two or three of prime importance, and schemes to elicit the questioning enthusiasm of his class along those few lines. But how to do it?

In the first place, the teacher must be a questioner himself. An old hen can hardly teach the eagle's brood to fly. Do not hesitate to tell your scholars of the doubts you once had, and how you won certainty from them. Show them by example that doubt is never a thing to be afraid of or ashamed of, unless it be a lazy doubt, viciously pleased with its own fog.

Then there is a question-inspiring face and attitude. If the teacher assumes the manner pontific and speaks *ex cathedra*, and has the air of one who says the ultimate word, he will smother every question. A sympathetic, open face, and the hearty spirit of good-fellowship, are the best invitations to inquiries.

Nor must the teacher be in a hurry, hastening from verse to verse with the nervous dispatch of an auctioneer. How many times must even a wise man look at a beetle, and how long, before he is moved to ask a wise question concerning it? Don't we sometimes make the recitation a mere exhibition of shooting-stars?

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Then, too, be on the watch for questions. How far ahead can you see a question coming? Before the scholar has made up his mind to ask it, if you have seeing eyes. An almost imperceptible quiver of the lips: "Question, Thomas?" Eyes suddenly wider: "What were you about to ask, Mary?" Forehead wrinkled: "Anything to say on that point, Edward?"

And if the question is a good one, why, "A capital question, Thomas!" "I hoped that some one would ask that, Mary!" A good question is more to be praised than a good answer, because it is rarer and more original; but does it always receive our hearty commendation?

Though the question leads you far out of your way, turn aside for it as gladly as you would turn from the road to pick up a diamond. Though you must leave the climax of the lesson unreached, see in this the climax. Though you are in full harangue, eagerly showing forth some great truth, stop short at once. A question in hand is worth a whole system of theology in the bush.

And even if the question be trivial, or pointless, or utterly irrelevant, in anticipation of other possible questions, this one is not to be scornfully or slightly waved aside. Don't kill the goose that lays golden eggs when she chances to lay one of pewter!

Half-statements, when shrewdly managed, will often elicit questions. "Yes, God was terribly angry with the Jews,—terribly. Think how powerful God

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is, and how awful his anger must be! You want to ask something, Billy? Whether it is right for God to be angry? Well, I am glad you asked that, because I want to tell you the difference between his anger and ours."

An over-statement will often draw out the longed-for inquiry. "When John urged every one with two coats to give one to some person who had no coat, what did he mean but this,—that, as long as any one in the world is poor, those who have more than they need ought to keep giving to those who have less than they need? I see that you have a word for us, Lizzie. What is it? How about the lazy people and the bad men? I hoped some one would bring up that point!"

And when your half-statement or over-statement is accepted without remonstrance by your scholars, a little jolly scolding as you make the correction yourself, and a warning that they must do better thinking the next time, will work wonders.

Sometimes the best plan is a direct call. "What do you think about that statement, now? Haven't you some question to ask about it? Don't you want to know something more about it?" If not a question follows, at least the scholars will know that you are expecting them to originate lines of thought and inquiry; and that is one thing gained.

This question is sometimes asked: "What modern teacher is so successful as Socrates, who made his scholars teachers in their turn?" The question

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touches a fundamental truth in pedagogics,—that the teacher's goal is the scholar's independence of the teacher. By brave example of sturdy thought, by sympathetic insight into the doubts and needs of the opening mind, by enthusiasm and winning tact, let us strive in this direction, as in all others, to be worthy followers of Him who made of his disciples teachers at whose feet the great Greek himself would have been glad to sit.

Chapter XIII

Trigger-Teaching

THE hard-working Sunday-school teacher picks up his cartridge, proudly carries it to the desired destination, and there explodes it. The shrewd Sunday-school teacher uses the scholar as a rifle, and simply pulls the trigger. Some teachers, that is, consider themselves as big guns. Other and better teachers seek to make practical working guns of their scholars. Between the two styles of teaching there is this difference, that the trigger-teaching usually hits the mark, while the big-gun teacher finds that the mark, if it is a live one, has taken itself out of the way by the time he has carried the cartridge to it.

In big-gun teaching the teacher does everything for the scholar; in trigger-teaching the teacher does nothing for the scholar that he can help. In big-gun teaching the teacher thinks; in trigger-teaching the teacher thinks how to get his scholars to think. Big-gun teaching parades; trigger-teaching stays in the tent and issues orders. Big-gun teaching is amus-

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ing; trigger-teaching is suggestive. Big-gun teaching develops the teacher; trigger-teaching develops the scholar. The teacher's true work is to educate, and "educate" means "to draw out," and not "to carry to."

"Oh! our scholars are not loaded," I hear many teachers object. "If we should pull the trigger, there would follow only a ridiculous click."

But your scholars *are* loaded, objectors. Though they may not be loaded with precisely the information you have been seeking from them, they are loaded with experiences,—all their short lives will hold. They are loaded with temptations and troubles and needs. They are loaded with questions and curiosity. They have information, too, any amount of it, that may be brought into suggestive connection with the lesson, if you know how to make shrewd use of their public-school history and geography and science.

To be sure, they probably know nothing definite about the time of the lesson's events, or the place, or the persons, or the circumstances. Well, make them load themselves. As you rehearse these facts concisely, make your scholars write them on slips of paper. Send one to the board, to set down what you dictate. Get one of their number to read aloud some brief and comprehensive summary of the lesson details. In one or all of these ways make them load themselves, and then—nothing is accomplished if you stop here—pull the trigger!

More than on any other thing save the help of

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the Holy Spirit, a teacher's success depends on the use he makes of the fact that his scholars are already loaded to some effective purpose; and the wise teacher will always ask himself, in the course of his preparation for the lesson, "What experiences of the members of my class will help them understand this lesson and its truths?" One has been sick lately. One is studying geology. One has a father who is a banker. One has just seen the Mammoth Cave.

If these things are to be likened to the bullets and shot, what is the powder? Must the teacher depend for that, too, largely on the pupil? Yes.

To be sure, much of the powder of successful teaching is the zeal and eagerness of the teacher himself. But his interest is a smokeless powder like the fulminating powder of the cap, whose value is solely to set fire to the powder of the scholar when the trigger is pulled. The scholar's interest, the scholar's powder, it is that must be relied upon to do the work, to carry the ball.

And so in trigger-teaching, much depends on the teacher's ability to excite curiosity and arouse interest. He will study his scholars' likings, and appeal to them in his illustrations; their needs, and refer to them in his applications. Sometimes he will state the matter too strongly, sometimes too feebly; in each case, with the express intention to draw out their protest. He will know how to use paradox so as to arouse, but not confuse. He will study different methods of emphasis, and will not use one alone. From each

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lesson he will select one truth, and one only, which he will treat with all the ardor of a lawyer arguing a matter of life or death. Above all, he will remember that the Spirit alone quickeneth, and will earnestly pray that fire from heaven may be added to his own little fulminating cap.

But many a teacher, conscious of all that I have been saying, does not know how to pull the trigger. It is not so simple in the Sunday-school as in the school of the battalion. The artful teacher will find many ways of trigger-pulling, suited to the diverse and changing needs of his class and of his topic. Sometimes he will put in the scholars' hands paper and pencil, and set them to writing or drawing. Sometimes he will send them in turn to his blackboard. Sometimes he will elicit the entire story from one, sometimes from ten. Sometimes he will introduce pictures for them to talk about, or maps for them to travel over, or objects for them to group their words and thoughts around. Always, however, he will remember that his best trigger is the little trigger-shaped interrogation-point. He will ask questions himself with the effectiveness born of careful preparation. Better than that, he will get his scholars to ask questions. In all these ways, and as many more as there are Sundays in the year, the wise teacher will pull the trigger.

Let no one pass from big-gun teaching to trigger-teaching with the idea that the latter will prove the easier. It is far more difficult to make the cartridge

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than to pick up and carry the ball which the cartridge would propel; but, for effective and profitable teaching, better ten minutes' work done by the class than an hour's work done by you in the presence of the class, even though to do the latter is far easier than to elicit the former.

If—as those who have been doing it all themselves will doubtless find it—this trigger-teaching comes especially hard at first, let them begin with getting their scholars to do *something* at first hand, though only a little, and let them work their way slowly to the pedagogical perfection of getting their scholars to do everything.

And does any one fear that this will destroy the personality and personal influence of the teacher? On the contrary, the trigger-teacher has to put ten times more of himself into every lesson than the big-gun teacher. The scholars get more of his personality, at the same time that they are gloriously, though unconsciously, developing their own.

Chapter XIV

Galvanic Teaching

IN his exceedingly suggestive book entitled "Before an Audience" Mr. Shepard insists strenuously on what he calls "physical earnestness" in a speaker. It is not meant by this that we are to go before our scholars with our nerves a-quiver, with headaches coming on, with our brains throbbing and our muscles drawn tight. A speaker must be, as Mr. Shepard insists, an animal galvanic battery on two legs. He must be at something corresponding to electric tension. He must be in earnest with his body, not lazy with it. No teacher who is not spirited will succeed with children, or with any one, long.

Nothing will more quickly win and permanently hold a child's attention than earnestness. Children's capacity for serious thinking is greatly undervalued. There is more philosophy in them than you dream of. They are very much in earnest themselves, and they rejoice to see other people very much in earnest.

I do not mean by this that one should always be

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serious with them. Nothing will gain their attention more than a joke; but joking with children is as dangerous as feeding them candy. They have no more taste henceforth for anything else, and to keep their attention you must continue to feed them candy and deal out jokes. The most successful teachers of children, judging not by the interest of the children so much as by permanent spiritual results, are those that are always deeply in earnest; and yet their earnestness is shot through and through with the sunshine.

The intensity I am advocating must not be the intensity of an auger, that bores. Oh, if teachers only knew enough not to teach too much! If one good idea is got into the heads of the children as the result of the lesson half-hour, then you have scored a victory. If you try to get in eight good ideas, you will not score one-eighth of a victory. Some teachers that I know want to get the whole body of theology and the entire system of ethics into each lesson. They skip with haste from truth to mighty truth, crowding into a lesson twenty weighty points, each one of which would be amply sufficient for the half-hour. The result is an impossibility of attention, for not enough is given about any one thing to fix it and hold it down.

Our Sunday-school teaching reminds me sometimes of a daily paper—all cut up into paragraphic articles; and if there is any topic of universal knowledge omitted, it will appear in the evening edition. A confirmed newspaper reader has become incapable

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of following an extended discussion, or of reading a book. I have stood before Sunday-school classes to which their teacher was in the habit of propounding a series of disconnected questions from a book or paper, and I have found it quite impossible to hold the attention of such classes for any length of time on one matter. They were anxious for another paragraph, for fresh head-lines, for a change of subject.

Most Sunday-school lessons are fruitful of multitudinous suggestions. Let us not teach so much that we teach nothing, or, worse than nothing, instruct in mental dissipation instead of mental concentration. We prepare for teaching with the lesson hour in view; we should rather have in view the hour following the lesson hour. What impression do we intend the lesson to make? How are we going to make the lesson stand out in relief?

I must now set off against the law of intensity the complementary law of motion. A mesmeric patient is sent into the hypnotic trance by continued staring at the same stationary object. This looks like perfect attention, but it results in sleep. There is a verbal hypnotism that is very common when teachers are trying to impress an idea by holding it up stolidly and persistently before the eyes of their scholars. That is not what I mean by intensity, and it is one of the commonest ways of destroying attention.

If you are anxious to impress a truth and yet hold attention, you must do it by presenting now this side of the truth and now that, now with parable and now

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with allegory, now with appeal and now with testimony, experience, quotation, objects. Arrived at the end, do not press the point against the scholars and stick it into them, but if they do not see it, go back and pass over the matter in a different way.

Moving bodies draw and hold the eye. Every one must look at a shooting star, a jumping horse, a running man, a flying bird, a rising kite. To keep attention, our lessons must have what the critics of novels call "movement." There is to be no still life in our pictures. Everything must be stirring, dramatic.

An accomplished teacher must have the power of painting word-pictures. It is not a difficult art. Hard study and zealous "putting yourself in his place" will accomplish it. Some way or other we must get the persons of the lesson clearly before our scholars' eyes, the scenes as if the scholars were surrounded by them, if we would maintain their attention. And even if the lesson is impersonal, we must dramatize it, we must invent situations and persons to illustrate the abstract thought, or we must draw illustrations from real history. These must all be real to us, or they will never be real to our scholars. Pictures always hold the attention of children. Let us remember this when we talk to them. Children are fond of motion. Let our teaching move briskly, then.

Chapter XV

Serial Teaching

THERE are short-story writers who are able to hold our attention charmingly for an episode, and there are other minds which are able to lead us entranced through the varied scenes of a long serial. So also there is short-story Sunday-school teaching and serial Sunday-school teaching. Short-story teaching treats each lesson as a separate unit; serial teaching considers each lesson a part only of a great, united whole.

Short-story teaching is far easier than serial teaching. It is concerned with but one set of circumstances, persons, and principles. For the serial teacher, on the contrary, every lesson must include a review and a prospectus. He must learn to see things in their relations. He must have a good memory, and a better imagination, to make his memory buoyant. This is not easy; and therefore it is that short-story teaching is much commoner than serial teaching.

And yet serial teaching is the right kind of teach-

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ing, for the following reasons. Just as a fine serial story adds to the enthusiasm for good numbers of a periodical, and tides over poor numbers, so, if you can get up a serial interest in your teaching, it will increase the interest of the good days, and will tide over with full seats and bright eyes the rainy, or cold, or hot, or sleepy days.

Besides, Christianity is a whole, and each of its many parts interdependent. We must not teach it, therefore, as if it were a patchwork, capable of being taken apart and put together as men will. We do wrong to the great system we teach, if our lessons do not leave the impression of a vast, coherent fabric,—too vast for one lesson to disclose, too coherent for one lesson to stand out apart.

Besides, however our lessons may change, our scholars are still the same; and this continuity of listeners should impart a serial interest to the teaching. Cause the scholars to feel that each lesson is to make definite contribution to their growth in knowledge and character. It won't hurt them if they are as mechanical about it as Peter, and enumerate, lesson after lesson, as in the apostle's famous addition-table, the virtues those lessons may add to their lives.

For these three reasons, then, our teaching should contain some strong element of serial interest. Many teachers err in using only one sort of connecting link, year in, year out, and are as likely to fail as the periodical which always prints serial stories of the same kind of plot, scenes, and characters. I will

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mention several serial elements which a wise teacher will use in turn, holding to one long enough for profit, but not too long for interest.

In the first place, it is often well to make the serial biographical. Your serial has then a hero. Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, John, Peter, Paul, Mary,—what glorious groups of chapters these names bind together! If we are zealous, patient, and imaginative, we can easily, with this magnificent material, construct for our classes serials whose absorbing interest will vie with any in their pet weekly story-paper. We can lead them to eager study of a man's development in character and in fortune.

At other times it is better to trust for the serial interest to history,—to study the evolution of a nation as before of a man. The wondrous tale of the rise of the Hebrews from Abraham, their metamorphosis under Moses, their consolidation under judges, their expansion under kings, their division, their downfall, their restoration, their subjugation, their new birth in Him who was before Abraham,—this story may be made to have a deep and constant serial interest.

Of course, with either the biographical or historical serial plan, great pains must be taken with that bugbear of the average teacher,—what the lesson-helps call intervening events, but many a scholar calls intervening mystifications. Often fully half the lesson-time should be given to them. Usually the antecedents they contain are absolutely necessary for an under-

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standing of the lesson,—text, persons, and principles. With them you teach history; without, episodes. They mean work, to be sure; but all unifying and solidifying means work.

At still other times or with other classes it is well to let the serial interest center around principles. Treat one group of lessons as illustrating the manly or unmanly qualities; consider another group primarily as a commentary on truth and falsehood; let your binding topic for another set be "What is True Religion?" "Sin and Salvation," "Serving and Served," "Success and Failure,"—how many lessons could be clustered naturally about these topics! Children are characteristically philosophers, and a treatment of Sunday-school lessons as illustrating different phases of some great truth is a method very attractive to them. "What does the Bible teach about truth-telling, about penalty for sin, about the conditions of happiness?" Sunday-school scholars should be ready to answer such questions, not by haphazard impromptus, but by a careful presentation of events, characters, and sayings bearing on each point, and representing the whole Bible.

Another excellent way of binding lessons together is by the scholars themselves. As I said, however the lessons change, the scholars remain the same, with the same prominent troubles, faults, and needs. Both they and you should know what these are. I often have scholars who bring up, Sunday after Sunday, in connection with topics the most diverse, the same

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questions, which are evidently stumbling-blocks to their minds and lives. These are usually practical matters wherein the Christian imperatives are strangely incongruous with worldly habits, such as the choice of a calling, absolute frankness of speech, public testimony for Christ, the careful observance of the Sabbath, sharp competition in trade. These are too big questions to be settled in a few minutes, and young folks who are seized by them in earnest have found for themselves a serial interest which will last for some time.

If we cannot take advantage of such a linking which our scholars discover for themselves, we can always bind lessons together by our own knowledge of our scholars' needs. If you have a young man in your class to whom the skepticism of the times is alluring, let him find something faith-inspiring and confirmatory of belief in every lesson. If you have a young girl burdened with sick-room duties and home cares beyond her strength, let her know that each lesson will bring her fresh energy and comfort. You need not tell your scholars that you know their struggles. Enough that you do know them, and link lesson to lesson for them in sweet chains of love and helpfulness.

When, by any of the four methods I have outlined, you thus establish a bond between your lessons, you have gained two great advantages besides the serial interest which you have aroused. In the first place, you study the Bible as a whole, not by extracts.

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You learn to interpret one portion by another. You find out the fallacy of fragments. You perceive that Christianity is a system, and not an anthology. In the second place, you have solved the review problem, for every lesson is now a review. If you were required to remember, in order, twelve words chosen at random, you would find it somewhat difficult; but it would be easy enough if those twelve words were arranged in a sentence. Serial teaching is building up a sentence, and the review is merely repeating that sentence. A serial teacher has no fear of review day. The short-story teacher is compelled to find for that day a new short story.

Now, have I not reserved mention of the one great tie of all our teaching? Whether Old Testament or New, history, prophecy, proverbs, or psalms, it is all one continued story, and the hero is Christ. By whatever unifying principle we group our lessons together, Christ unifies the groups. Year in, year out, if Christ is at the heart of our teaching, that teaching is consecutive, serial, solid. Without him, it is disjointed, fragmentary, frail. Not retracting a word I have written about the value of these other methods of arousing continued interest, yet it must be said that they are all worthless without Christ. In him each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.

Chapter XVI

Teaching the Psalms

THE Lesson Committee often assigns us two or three lessons in a book, and from these few lessons the scholars must get some comprehensive knowledge of the entire book. A book study, therefore, will not be out of place in this series of suggestions to teachers, and I have chosen the Psalms, since they are likely to be most fruitful of hints as to the teaching of other books.

A systematic knowledge of the Psalms is rarely sought after. Only one book of the Bible is more loved: the Gospel of John; only one is read less methodically: the Book of Proverbs.

It is the fault of many teachers that they teach all books of the Bible in the same way. Prophecy, history, poetry, prose, Ruth and Revelation, John and Judges,—it is all one to them. The Psalms, like all other books of the Bible, are unique, and need their own especial mode of treatment. Here are some hints concerning this treatment.

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Get first, from the Revised Version, a comprehensive idea of the five Books of Psalms, with their similar endings. Note their length and the total number of psalms. From the Bible dictionary learn what you can about the time when these books were collected, and the probable authors of the anonymous psalms.

Study the psalms by types. We have the First Psalm, which contrasts the good and evil. Psalms of the Good are 1, 26, 41, 72, 94, 101, 126, 127, 128, 144. Psalms of the Evil are 10, 14, 36, 37, 49, 52, 53, 58, 64, 73, 82, 109, 129, 140. The Second is a Psalm of Power. Others are 11, 21, 24, 29, 47, 48, 60, 76, 77, 83, 97, 108, 111, 114, 139. The Nineteenth and the One Hundred and Third are Psalms of Praise. With these study 8, 9, 18, 30, 33, 34, 44, 65, 66, 67, 68, 75, 85, 89, 90, 92, 93, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 104, 105, 106, 107, 112, 113, 117, 118, 134, 135, 136, 138, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150. The Second and the Seventy-second are Messianic Psalms. So also are Psalms 45 and 110. The Twenty-third is a Psalm of Trust. Similar psalms are 4, 7, 16, 27, 31, 56, 62, 71, 91, 125, 131. The Fifty-first is a Psalm of Forgiveness. Such, too, are 25, 32, 39, 40, 80, 81. With Psalm 84, a Psalm of Worship, go 15, 42, 50, 57, 63, 87, 115, 122, 132, 133. Besides these, the following may be classified as Psalms of Help: 3, 12, 20, 35, 43, 46, 59, 61, 70, 79, 121, 124; the following as Psalms of Sorrow: 6, 13, 22, 38, 55, 69, 74, 88, 102, 120, 137, 143; and the following as Psalms of Prayer: 5, 17, 28, 54,

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86, 116, 123, 130, 141, 142. Psalms 78 and 119 are Psalms of the Law. Of course, this is only a rough classification of the psalms. It will be a pleasant and valuable task for you to classify them more elaborately.

Read again the life of David, found in the passage from 1 Samuel 16:1 to 1 Kings 2:11. In connection with each psalm you read, think what may have been the king's fortunes when he wrote it, or what experience of his may have prompted it. This psalm of sorrow may have had birth in Absalom's revolt; this song of trust may have welled from a rock of hiding in the desert; this hymn of triumphant strain may have celebrated some victory over Saul or the Syrians; this pleading for forgiveness may have been a wail over Uriah.

The psalms are all dramatic. Here, more than anywhere in the study of the Bible, you need to use imagination, to "put yourself in his place." The psalms are in the first person. Fancy yourself the psalmist as you read his songs. Pray his prayers, exult in his praise, beat your breast with his agony of shame, be calm in his assurance of forgiveness and peace.

In like manner, as you prepare to teach, fancy times in your scholars' lives to which these psalms will apply, times when it would be well for them to sing these psalms, and teach with these times in clear view.

Be sure thus to translate David's experience into that of your scholars. These psalms are of universal moment, as they come so directly from David's heart, and God's; and yet they need this translation, be-

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cause David's surroundings were not ours. His foes, his sins, his exiles, his triumphs, were not ours in form, however much the same in reality.

There are frequent quotations of the psalms to be found in the later books of the Bible. These, especially those made by Christ and the apostles, constitute a priceless commentary. Search for them with the help of a concordance or a reference Bible.

Aside from this, the psalms are especially fit for illustrative quotations, and the children may be inspired to gather them eagerly. Assign to each scholar a verse for illustration from some other part of the Bible, in some such way as this:

"The Lord is my shepherd."

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep" (John 10: 11).

"I shall not want."

"Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 7: 32, 33).

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11: 28).

"He leadeth me beside the still waters."

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water, springing up unto eternal life" (John 4: 14).

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"He restoreth my soul."

"I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11: 25).

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14: 6).

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

"Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11: 26).

"For thou art with me."

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 20).

"Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth" (John 14: 16, 17).

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

"I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall not hunger" (John 6: 35).

"Thou anointest my head with oil."

"Grace and peace . . . from Jesus the anointed, . . . who has made us to be kings and priests unto his God and Father" (Rev. 1: 4-6).

"My cup runneth over."

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10: 16.)

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"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled" (John 15: 11).

"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

"In my Father's house are many abiding-places. . . . I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14: 2).

In preparing for this exercise the children will learn how to use the Bible index and the concordance.

Watch the paragraphs of the Revised Version. They make useful indications of the passage from one thought to the other.

The psalms lend themselves well to the useful exercises of analysis, condensation, and paraphrase. Get your scholars to write out for you, one, a brief tabular statement of the contents of the psalm; another, the thought of the psalm in words of his own; a third, the substance of the psalm, with all superfluous words and repetitions omitted.

It is a capital plan to underscore in your Bibles, and get your scholars in the course of the lesson to underscore in theirs, the key-sentences of the psalm. In the First Psalm, for instance, you have in bold relief the main thought of the six verses if you underscore "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked. Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The wicked are not so." There is your outline.

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Do not rest satisfied until, for your scholars and for you, the psalm you are studying is a unit, and stands out in your minds with clear-cut individuality. It is especially necessary to get through with the entire text when your lesson is in the Psalms. It is not like a series of disconnected proverbs: it is a picture; and your understanding of it will lack some essential part until you have all the verses.

Indeed, I would go over each psalm with the class at least five times, rapidly: first, to remove stumbling-blocks of strange customs and expressions; second, to grasp the general thought; third, to get its application to David's life; fourth, to get its lesson for our lives; fifth, a verse-by-verse study for all possible side-lights and instruction.

Observe the parallel expressions. Use only the Revised Version, which correctly prints the psalms as poetry. Read them rhythmically; chant them; intone them; get the impression of songs. Come to feel the beauty and meaning of the frequent refrains.

Go on a tour of discovery, seeking for the noble metrical translations of these psalms found in our hymn-books and religious anthologies. For Psalm 19 read Addison's magnificent hymn, "The spacious firmament on high"; for Psalm 103, H. F. Lyte's "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven," or Isaac Watts' "My soul, repeat His praise"; for Psalm 72, James Montgomery's "Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son!" or Isaac Watts' "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun does his succes-

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sive journeys run"; for Psalm 84, H. F. Lyte's "Pleasant are Thy courts above," or Isaac Watts' "Lord of the worlds above"; for Psalm 23, Addison's "The Lord my pasture shall prepare," or others more familiar; and for other psalms the same writers, with Wesley, John Newton, Scott, and many more. Your scholars will be interested in searching for these, and bringing them in.

Suppose we were studying an English hymn-book. What would we ask first about each hymn? We would ask what sentiment it was capable of inspiring. The same question is to be asked about these inspired hymns; and throughout each of them we are to trace not so much a train of thought as a train of feeling.

The psalms are subjective, and for that reason are particularly hard, some of them, for children to appreciate. We must interpret them all the more thoroughly by objective illustrations. Here the ordinary problem is reversed. In our ordinary lessons the example from real life is given, and from it the teacher must draw spiritual lessons. Here the spiritual meditation is given, to be applied to real life.

Notwithstanding this, the psalms are eminently pictorial, and especially adapted to illustration. See how many pictures are suggested by the following words from the most famous of the psalms: "shepherd," "want," "lie down," "green pastures," "leadeth," "still waters," "guideth," "paths," "valley of the shadow," "rod and staff," "a table prepared," "enemies," "anointed," "cup runneth over." All

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such pictures should be gathered, and used to make the lesson vivid to the picture-loving little ones.

There is especial need in teaching the psalms to explain how the force of imagery varies with varying conditions of climate and modes of life; how much more, for instance, was meant to David than to us by such symbols as "a rock," "shadow," "sun," "shield," "water-courses"!

Children are fond of metaphors, but they make comical blunders with them, and deal, unless we are careful, all too literally with such passages as "a table in the presence of mine enemies," "the wicked are like the chaff," "the congregation of the righteous," "break them with a rod of iron." If the teacher is in doubt just how far to carry these metaphors, I know no better example of the wise and beautiful use of them than Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." The reading of that book will make a capital preparation for the teaching of the psalms.

Few lessons in the seven years' course will be so admirable as these for committing to memory. If you want to inspire your class to better work in that line, now is your time.

Note that the psalms are all optimistic. Sound their key-note of peace and joy.

Here, if anywhere in the Bible, spiritual teaching is needed. An essential part of the preparation for teaching the psalms is devout prayer.

Chapter XVII

Those Temperance and Missionary Lessons

INTEMPERANCE is the church's greatest foe, missions her greatest task. Around these two topics cluster the highest chivalry, the most splendid romance, of our modern world. The shout of the battle is in them, the sweep of the regiment. No lessons are more important than those devoted to these two great themes, and none can be made more interesting.

And yet to many a teacher they are bugbears. To these eight lessons—one sixth of the whole—they go with dull hearts. They do wish the Lesson Committee would leave them out of the list.

What is the trouble? There is no life back of the lesson. They have "got up" their lesson as best they can; but a lesson is not got up, it grows up. They do not know enough about missions and the temperance reform to be interested in them. No information, no inspiration.

To be sure, there are few passages in the Bible suitable for use in temperance lessons, and but few

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referring directly to such enterprises as modern missions. The Acts record merely the beginnings of missions, and intemperance was scarcely a problem in New Testament days. Nevertheless, both temperance and missions find in the Book their fundamental and sufficient inspiration; and taking our starting-point from the lesson text, we may fairly launch forth into seas as wide as the world of men and action.

Indeed, so multiform are the phases of these two topics that to avoid confusion and leave clear impressions every temperance or missionary lesson should have a specialty. Let me indicate a few of the many possible themes.

1. *A Bible Search.*—Spend the hour hunting out everything the Bible says upon temperance, or all the leading passages bearing on missions. The scholars will read them aloud. Some verses they will repeat from memory. They will mark them with colored pencils in their Bibles. They will discover the central thought in each reference and write it on the blackboard, thus building up a compact summary. The exercise has an air of finality that will please the scholars.

2. *A Biographical Lesson.*—Let everything cluster around some great leader in missions or the temperance reform. For the latter, select John B. Gough, Miss Willard, Lady Henry Somerset, Father Mathew, Francis Murphy. For the great missionaries,—India: Carey, Heber, Martyn; Burmah: Judson; China:

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Nevius, Morrison, Gilmour ; Japan : Neesima ; Oceanica : Coan, Paton, Patteson ; America : Gardiner, Eliot, Whitman, Brainerd ; Turkey : Schaffler, Dwight, Hamlin ; Africa : Livingstone, Mackay, Mofat, Taylor, Hannington. There is material enough for a lifetime of teaching!

Get as many scholars as possible to read beforehand in the encyclopedia a short account of the chosen life. One of the class may write a five-minute essay upon the hero. Characteristic anecdotes concerning him may be distributed among the scholars for each to relate. No better series of short missionary biographies was ever published than that sold by the publishers of this book at the low price of 50 or 75 cents a volume. Use them. If the class during the hour can really make the acquaintance of a great missionary or reformer, it will be vast gain.

Another and most profitable kind of biographical meeting may be based, not upon single lives, but upon a group of lives. Study "The Great Missionaries of the Bible," "Bible Heroes of Temperance," "Some Noble Lives Spoiled by Intemperance," "Some Magnificent Missionaries of Our Denomination."

3. *An Historical Lesson.*—The temperance reform has already a notable history, with many chapters worth careful study. Spend an hour with the Woman's Crusade,—its origin, its leaders, its many thrilling scenes, its notable results. The Washingtonian movement, the blue-ribbon movement, the World's

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Petition, "temperance in the White House,"—these are themes for other studies.

And as for missions, the puzzle will be to know where to end, when there are, for instance, the "Serampore Brotherhood" to study, the "Lone Star" mission, the Madagascar martyrs, the China Inland Mission, the all-but-miracle of Metlakahtla, the conquest of Hawaii, the transformation of Fiji, the bloody chronicles of Uganda. With any one of these stories for a nucleus, your missionary lesson will be certain of leaving a deep impression.

4. *An Organization Lesson.*—Study one or more of the great temperance organizations,—its origin, its noble leaders, its methods and aims, its practical results. The W. C. T. U. and the "Y's," the Good Templars, the National Temperance Society, the temperance work of Christian Endeavor societies, may be studied in this way.

This plan is especially valuable for the missionary lessons, which should render your scholars familiar with the history and triumphs of each missionary board of your denomination, home and foreign. The remarkable circumstances of its founding, the heroic men and women it has sent forth (exhibit portraits), the places where it labors (show views), the periodicals it publishes (have samples to give away), a few round figures to set forth the results of it all,—that is a scanty outline. The larger work of the church would profit immensely by such use of an occasional missionary lesson.

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5. *A Newspaper Lesson.*—In another chapter I discuss the use that may wisely be made of the newspaper in our Sunday-school teaching. Once in a while the specialty of a lesson may be a study of current events in their bearing on missions or on the temperance reform.

Some temperance orator has made a noble speech which you find well reported. The W. C. T. U. has just held its annual convention. Neal Dow's birthday has been widely celebrated. South Carolina has adopted its system of State dispensaries. A hot campaign for prohibition is in progress in Canada. The teacher that centers his lesson on one of these themes is sure of lively interest which may be led to practical result.

Or, if it is missionary Sunday, let the teacher utilize the most absorbing topics of foreign news. It may be the Spanish seizure of the Caroline Islands, the French capture of Madagascar, the Japanese campaign in Formosa or that of the English in Matabeleland or the Soudan, the Italian war with Abyssinia, the Indian famine, the troubles in Crete, the massacres in Armenia. What scholar, after a lesson shrewdly introduced by such recitals, will fail to see that missions are a topic very much alive?

6. *A Map Lesson.*—Few things condense, combine, and clarify bits of information like a map, provided you can put your information upon it. A map may be utilized in a temperance lesson in two good ways. If you are in a city, draw the streets of some

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section, or of the entire city, if possible. Send your scholars out along all streets, dividing them up, and have them count the saloons in each block, locating also the churches and schoolhouses. I suppose, of course, that your scholars are of suitable age for this work. Next Sunday, as they report, put a black spot on the map for every saloon, and a blue spot for every church and schoolhouse. Your map will point its own moral.

At another time draw a map of the United States, and give a graphic view of the temperance laws of the land, coloring the prohibition States one color, using a different color to designate the Massachusetts plan, the South Carolina plan, and so on.

More can be done with a map in a missionary lesson. For instance, you may select a single country, say India. Provide "stickers" of bright-colored paper. Let some be large and circular. As you talk about the four or five great languages of that many-tongued empire, get the scholars to fasten these "stickers" in the centers of the various language areas. Let other "stickers" be cut into small stars. Three of these, of one color, fastened in the neighborhoods of Bombay, Madura, and Ceylon, will represent the Congregational missions. In the same way you will show the location of the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian missions and those of other denominations. Population "stickers" may also be used, and "stickers" with the names of great missionaries may show where they labored.

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On another day you may take a map of the entire world, and thus indicate the location of all the mission fields of your denomination. If this map is kept before the class from that time, every item of missionary information will have fresh interest and point.

7. *A Statistics Lesson.*—At this lesson distribute, for the scholars to read aloud, slips of paper containing temperance or missionary statistics,—the numbers of saloons or missionaries, of drunkards dying or converts made each day, the cost of missions or of strong drink compared with other expenditures, and the like. Get the class to cut strips of paper of various lengths to represent graphically the comparative costs. Drill the scholars in temperance or missionary arithmetic. Telling them the number of heathen in China, ask how long a procession they would make, marching in single file one foot apart. Giving them the liquor expenditure for a year, have them measure a pile of silver dollars and calculate how tall a pile would equal the annual cost of drink. Such books as “The Missionary Pastor,” published by the Fleming H. Revell Company, and “Weapons for Temperance Warfare” and “Fuel for Missionary Fires,” published by the United Society of Christian Endeavor, will suggest many similar exercises.

8. *A Quotations Lesson.*—The teacher holds in his hand a bunch of papers, on each of which is written an interesting quotation bearing on missions or temperance. The collection will include longer anecdotes as well as brisk sentences. Many will bear famous

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names. Each scholar will choose a quotation at random and read it aloud. The teacher will draw out its meaning by questions, will add illustrations and practical comments, will tell something about the author of the quotation, or will show the connection of the thought or anecdote with the day's lesson. In some classes the scholars themselves may be trusted to bring their own quotations or anecdotes.

Let me mention briefly a few more devices out of the many that may add interest to these lessons. Get a trained worker along temperance or missionary lines to come in and address the class. Carry out a series of simple experiments showing the physiological effects of alcohol. Make a study of the best missionary hymns, their authors, and the events that prompted them. Try a fifteen-minute debate on some missionary or temperance topic. Get the scholars now and then to write five-minute essays or give five-minute talks on appropriate themes. Let one edit a temperance or missionary paper,—in manuscript, of course,—collecting contributions from each scholar, and reading the result before the class as a sample number of the "Cold Water Herald" or the "Missionary Monitor." Some Sunday, call on every member of the class to sign the pledge. On a mission Sabbath make an appeal for tithe-giving and present a tithe-givers' pledge. Give the wonderful history of the Student Volunteer movement, and urge the scholars to consider the mission field as a possibility for each one of them. Enliven some missionary lesson

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with entertaining accounts of the strange customs of the country under discussion, and get together all the illustrative material you and your scholars can find. The Sunday-school and the Christian Endeavor society will do well to make a collection of curios for such purposes.

It is an admirable plan to set each of your scholars to doing some steady work in preparation for these lessons. One may watch the newspapers and collect temperance facts and illustrations of the evils of strong drink. The various missionary societies of the denomination may be divided among the scholars, each to gather interesting bits concerning the work of the board assigned to him. In the same way the mission lands may be apportioned out, and "the gentleman from India" or "our representative in China" be called upon to report the latest news from his field. In this plan the children will cooperate very zealously.

Of course it goes without saying (*does it, though?*) that each teacher will be a subscriber to the missionary magazines of his own denomination, as well as to that common denominator of all the missionary magazines, the "Missionary Review of the World."

He will also take, if possible, a good temperance paper, such as the "Union Signal" or the "National Temperance Advocate"; and if he can afford them, he will not be without the temperance and missionary encyclopedias.

Indeed, the theme branches out into channels so

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many and so wide that, when once the teacher is started upon them, his greatest lack will be of time for exploration; and so far from desiring the temperance and missionary lessons fewer than eight, he will wish it were possible for them to come every month!

Chapter XVIII

Topical Lessons

THE Bible is so full of suggestion that it is impossible, in the brief Sunday-school half-hour, to view the many fields of thought opened before us with any degree of satisfying completeness. That fact, indeed, constitutes one of the greatest satisfactions of the Book.

Neither teacher nor scholar can go very far with earnestness in Bible study without feeling an intense desire to collate and compare, to go to the bottom, to take views single in purpose, but wide in reach. This wish to read the Scriptures as a whole has ever been held a sign of healthful growth in Christian endeavor. How may we encourage and satisfy this desire? Here is a method I have repeatedly found helpful to my class and myself.

I prepare for myself what I call topical lessons. I have noticed especial interest in some one topic,—the use of Sunday, say, or future punishment, heaven, prayer, abuse of money, missions, the nature of sin.

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On some Sunday, then, I announce that one of these topics is to be discussed at next week's meeting. I ask the scholars to think the matter over, and look up texts. Some do, some do not, as is usual in such matters. Sunday come, I have in large script, pinned to the wall in view of the class, an outline of the topic chosen, with the texts to be used indicated in clear figures. It is intended for a lesson in methods of Bible study as much as in Bible contents, and so aims to be complete and thorough in its range. The plan is explained, and the scope of the subject. We take it up by natural divisions.

All have Bibles, of course. The references are numbered. "Mr. Brown, please find No. 1; Mr. Jones, No. 2; Mr. Robinson, No. 3," and so on. In a few seconds we are ready for a discussion of the first division. I shall trust to the scholars' memory for the commoner quotations, and not trust in vain, if I have done my duty previously. This division disposed of, more or less to our satisfaction, we pass to another point, then to another, rapidly or leisurely, as the time permits, being careful that in the half-hour the general scope of Bible thought in the matter, its largeness and depth, its insight and minuteness of detail, be adequately exhibited.

May I show you a sample outline?

FAITH.

1. What is it? (Heb. 11:1; John 20:29.)
2. Whence comes it?

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- (a) From God (Rom. 12: 3; 1 Cor. 2: 4, 5; 12: 4, 8, 9; 1 Pet. 1: 4, 5).
 - (b) From Christ (Heb. 12: 2).
 - (c) From the Bible (John 17: 20; 20: 31; Rom. 15: 4; 2 Tim. 3: 15).
 - (d) From preaching (Rom. 10: 14; 1 Cor. 3: 5).
 - (e) But all one (Eph. 4: 5; 4: 13; Jude 3).
 - (f) Not from works (Eph. 2: 8, 9; Rom. 3: 27, 28; Gal. 3: 11, 12; 2: 16).
3. What does it do?
- (1) The works of faith:
 - (a) It is a work (John 6: 28, 29; Rom. 4: 5).
 - (b) Which draws us to God (Rom. 5: 1, 2; Eph. 3: 12; 3: 17; Jas. 1: 5, 6).
 - (c) Thus pleasing him (Heb. 11: 6).
 - (d) Which frees us from sin (2 Pet. 1: 5; Acts 13: 38, 39; Rom. 3: 21, 26; Acts 15: 9).
 - (e) Leads us into salvation (Mark 16: 16; John 1: 12, 13).
 - (f) Conquers this world (1 John 5: 4, 5).
 - (g) Gives us peace therein (Eph. 6: 16; Rom. 5: 1).
 - (h) And finally eternal life (Rom. 1: 17; John 3: 16; 3: 36).
 - (2) The works from faith:
 - (a) Faith alone is dead (Eph. 2: 10; Jas. 2: 14-26).
 - (b) Faith a beginning (Jude 20; Col. 2: 6, 7).
 - (c) Of wondrous power (Mark 9: 23; 11: 22-24; Luke 17: 5, 6).

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- (d) Working out through love (1 Thess. 5: 8; 1 Cor. 13: 2; 13: 13; Gal. 5: 6; 1 John 3: 23).
 - (e) In miracle (Matt. 9: 22; 9: 29; Luke 8: 50; Acts 3: 16).
 - (f) In history (Heb. 11: 32-34; Matt. 16: 16; John 1: 49; 11: 25, 27; Acts 6: 5; 8: 37; 11: 24).
4. Have I it?
- (a) There is false faith (1 Tim. 1: 5).
 - (b) The testing (2 Cor. 13: 5; Jas. 1: 3; 1 Pet. 1: 6, 7).
 - (c) The seeking (Phil. 1: 27; Jude 3).
 - (d) The keeping (1 Cor. 16: 13; Heb. 10: 38; Col. 1: 23; 1 Tim. 1: 18, 19; 6: 12; 1 Pet. 5: 8, 9).
5. Now and hereafter (2 Cor. 5: 7; 1 Cor. 13: 12).

Manifestly, when this plan is carried out, there will be scant time for the regular lesson; probably no time at all. The next Sunday two lessons must be recited. But your topical study has grown out of the regular lessons, and in its turn will excite in them fresh interest.

It is obvious that each teacher must choose his own topics and make his own outlines, suited to his own methods of thought, and to the age and intelligence of his class. The above was used in a class of young men, college students in part. Themes of an entirely different nature might well be chosen,—a

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view of Christ's miracles or parables or sermons, of Old Testament miracles, or of sacred history in some one line. It might even be found profitable, as it surely would be interesting, to collate, arrange, and discuss Scripture references to the eye, the ear, birds, flowers, trumpets. To my mind, some such occasional excursion as this seems to lead the scholars, especially those approaching manhood and womanhood, to a more comprehensive and methodical knowledge of the riches of the best Book, and to one of the most resultful methods of studying it.

Chapter XIX

Introducing Thoughts

A LITTLE child once declared that she liked a certain sermon because there were so many "likes" in it. For the same reason, that same child would have liked Christ as a Sunday-school teacher. And we teachers will gain Christ's success in the same measure as we gain his power of putting the whole universe back of our thought.

For a thought comes forcibly from our minds in proportion as we see its relatedness. If we have put it into connection with a score of things, that score get behind it and push. An unrelated thought comes as tamely from the mind as a Jack from its box when the spring is broken. And so when a Sunday-school teacher would present a truth energetically, he must look all around the truth, crowd his mind with applications of the truth, fall in love with its beauty from many points of view; in brief, become thoroughly acquainted with the truth, and its enthusiastic friend.

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How, now, shall we introduce the truth to the child? It is the manner of some to take the truth and the child, and bump heads together,—a process which very naturally develops a mutual shyness.

The true teacher, on the contrary, is a skilled master of ceremonies. From the crowd of likenesses, illustrations, and applications which have made him and the truth acquainted, he chooses one to go with it and act as mutual friend, to introduce the stranger thought to the child's mind, and put the two on easy terms together.

He does not make the common mistake of sending along the entire crowd, so that the introduced is lost in the throng of masters of ceremonies, so that the truth is confused, and acquaintanceship embarrassed by the parade of illustration. He knows that where one parable makes, two mar, and three ruin.

Nor will the shrewd teacher ever attempt introduction by something other than a mutual friend of both parties,—the truth and the child's mind. The myth of Alcestis may be connected with your own thought of the resurrection, but it is itself a stranger to the child's mind. The true mutual friend would be the metamorphosis of the butterfly.

Is that comparison stale? In seeking for fresh and brilliant illustrations, we are apt to forget that the longer the mutual friend has known both parties, the more apt will he be at furthering their acquaintance. The butterfly is truly to us a trite illustration of the resurrection, but not to the child.

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Do not push forward the thought first, and after a ten minutes' awkward, floundering parley between it and the child's mind, proceed to introduce them by your illustration. After two people have talked together for ten minutes, they either need no introduction by that time, or have destroyed the possibility of acquaintanceship. Illustration first.

And after the introduction two mistakes may be made. The introducing illustration may keep on chattering, not allowing the truth and the mind of the child to say a word to each other. A master of ceremonies, who knows his business, knows when to draw quietly back, and leave the new acquaintanceship room to grow. The illustration is not the end, but the means.

The other mistake is in allowing the mutual friend to withdraw abruptly, before the two, the stranger thought and the child's mind, have broken the ice. Let him stay and put in a clever word now and then, until the acquaintanceship can stand by itself.

Nor is there any reason why, with every fresh truth, a fresh illustration should strut forward. Those social assemblies are best managed which are planned by one wise woman, and permeated throughout by her thoughtfulness, words of tact, and shrewd bits of engineering. One mistress to a party, as one cook to the broth. And so if you can find one illustration which is on good terms with all the truths in the lesson, and familiar also to the child's mind, by all means let that one illustration hold sway, as a genial host,

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throughout the entire half-hour, and associate the whole together.

But when the illustration ceases to illustrate, part with it, regretfully but promptly; as I, following my own advice, must here part with the illustration which has done duty hitherto.

In this whole matter, as in all others, only pains-taking deserves or gains success. A genius for parable is rare. Gift here means the poet's power, his breadth of vision, his depth of sympathy, his tact and sense of fitness. But though it is a poet's gift, it need not be born in one. How may we gain skill in illustration?

In the first place, by gaining knowledge. How can we expect Jewish history to seem real, isolated, as it so often is, from all other history? We, too, have a Father Abraham. Cæsar crossed a river once, as, and yet not as, did Joshua. Compare Washington's farewell address with Samuel's. And, too, without science, such sciences as geology and astronomy, a Sunday-school teacher is but half armed. How wonderfully and inspiringly God's two books supplement each other, no one can guess who has not put the two together. In brief, for the theme is infinite, almost any fact, once learned, has constant surprises of usefulness, and in no ways more frequently than this of illustration.

In the next place, by gaining sympathy. No one can well use illustrations who is out of touch with his fellows. The best possible illumination of life ques-

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tions is the story of the lives around you,—their trials and triumphs. Do you know a child who has done a heroic deed, though quietly, for the Master? Have you a friend who has conquered some sore temptation? Have you met a good man struggling against some inherited evil tendency? Have you knowledge of the disastrous results of some single life? Life comes closest to life, and experience furnishes the best similes.

And then we may study books, and learn how effective writers have used illustrations. A note-book collection of these will be helpful, even though the making of it is the end of it; for this study will help us toward the teacher's chief goal,—the power of putting things in the best way.

The newspapers should be one of the most fruitful fields for the gleaning of illustrations; and so they will be, when they learn to chronicle the good as thoroughly and brilliantly as they now chronicle the bad.

Of course,—though an "of course" seldom practically accepted,—a Bible character is the very best illustration of a Bible character, the Old Testament of the New, the last lesson of this, Moses of Paul, and Sinai of Hermon.

And of course, too,—though again a belied "of course,"—the less the illustration given by the teacher, and the more given by the scholar in answer to questions, the more vivid the impression. Too often we teachers smack our lips at the coming of the similes, and launch out into harangue.

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Let us see in all this much more than a scheme of indirections. It is no easy task to find the best way into a child's mind, nor quite without pains and difficulty is the imitation of the Teacher who spoke many things in parables.

Chapter XX

Illustrations and Applications

SUNDAY-SCHOOL teachers often make the mistake of confounding "lesson illustrations" with "practical applications." A lesson illustration is a picture of the truth you are studying as exemplified in spheres of life foreign to your scholars; practical application pictures the truth in their own lives. In other words, a practical application is an illustration that the scholars can practice. The point I want to make is, that the practical application should be used, in our own precious half-hour, not to the exclusion of the lesson illustration, but largely predominating over it.

For instance, if you were discussing the great cloud of invisible witnesses that compass us about, you might illustrate the truth by the famous story of Napoleon's speech to the troops in Egypt, "From yonder pyramids, my men, forty centuries look down upon us"; but, if you have not time for both, a practical application would be far better: "John, who is one of this great cloud of witnesses that is most ten-

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derly and anxiously watching your life?" "My father." "And who, Harry, is among your invisible guardians?" "My mother." That is more forcible than "forty centuries."

Again, one of the finest illustrations of devotion to principle is afforded by the conversion to the Baptist faith of one of our first American foreign missionaries, the immortal Judson, who, at the bidding of conscience and conviction, cast loose in mid-ocean from the only missionary society in America, and his only assured support. That is magnificent, but it is only an illustration, one needing to be translated into terms of child life thus: "Suppose you are in a school examination, and your neighbor on one side hands you a bit of folded paper to pass to your neighbor on the other side, and you are pretty sure it is to help him cheat in the examination, and suppose the whole school will think you mean and stuck up if you refuse to pass the paper, what are you going to do?" That is a test of devotion to principle such as the child is likely to meet.

To be sure, there are illustrations which come so close to average circumstances that they are also applications. For instance, to take another great missionary, William Carey, his boyish fall from the tree he was climbing, with the result of breaking his leg, and, on recovery, his immediate set-to at the same tree again; his saying that his business was preaching the gospel, but that he cobbled shoes "to pay expenses"; his bidding the Christians left at home to

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“hold the ropes while he went down,”—all these are very practical illustrations, quite within the children’s sphere, since it is well for them also to have grit even about tree-climbing, since they are to hold their ordinary duties subordinate to their spiritual life, and since they have missionary money to spend and missionary prayers to make. If, however, I were teaching the passage in the Acts that relates how the disciples had all things in common, though I might tell about the splendid carrying out of that principle in Carey’s Serampore brotherhood, yet, if I had time for only the one, I should certainly prefer a practical application of the text to the sharing of apples and the lending of bicycles.

It is helpful to a boy, of course, if he would cultivate patience, to have before his eyes the picture of that cave looking out over Scottish hills and heather, and of the spider at the cave’s mouth teaching its beautiful lesson to the Bruce within; but the picture remains only a picture unless the spider of the boy’s imagination is taught to run lines connecting every point of the picture with his geography lesson and his garden weeding. Far too many war stories are told in our Sunday-schools. They do not build up very rapidly the Christian soldier. Far too many illustrations are drawn from what is wrongly called the distinctive “heroic age” of the world. Not thus is the Christian hero furnished for his nineteenth-century toils.

A similar remark is to be made regarding illustra-

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tions from science. They must not be permitted to detract from or exclude the practical application. If we are teaching our boys and girls how all things work together for good to those that love God, we may use the illustration of the rainbow, explaining that it is on the very raindrops of the storm itself that God paints his wonderful symbol of hope and trust. That is poetical and true, but the lesson remains as misty as the rainbow itself unless you go on to show your scholars how the lame boy among them gets more time for study on account of his lameness, how the boy who has been sick has learned far more than he knew before about the love of his dear ones and about the great Physician, how the boy who has had to leave school and go to work is none the less getting a priceless schooling in patience and determination and energy and faithfulness.

Many of these practical illustrations you may by questions draw out from the boys themselves. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Call for stories of boyish quarrels settled by some boy Solon. That is better than telling about the Massachusetts boards of arbitration in strikes. "My cup runneth over." Draw out a list of their own boyish blessings, which are more to them than those of any saint or psalmist.

But especially this practical application, to be successful, must be the work of a consecrated imagination. A Sunday-school teacher must think himself into the lives of others. "Bear ye one another's burdens." Now don't rake up from your encyclopedias

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the story of St. Christopher, beautiful as it is, and try to twist it into an illustration of the text. No. Ask the bright scholar what he does to help his duller friends understand the knotty problems at school. Ask the merry boys what they do when mother is tired amusing the baby. Ask the selfish boy what a lad that greatly wanted a new sled could do to help his father bear his burden of poverty.

To get these applications you have had to "put yourself in his place," to picture to your mind your scholars' joys and sorrows, desires and disappointments, hopes and fears, labor and play. And in the process, and as its result, have come two rewards that no thumbing of dictionaries of biography, and manuals of mythology, and encyclopedias of illustrations, could ever give. You have come closer to the lives of your scholars, and you have drawn those lives closer to the present, practical Christ.

Chapter XXI

Righteous Padding

It is marvelous how rich in suggestion all passages of the Bible are to the thoughtful, studious mind. It is no less marvelous how bare and barren the wealthiest portions become when filtered through a bare and barren mind.

Truth is valuable only as it is *extended* into life. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"; that means to the child very little, packed into this condensed form. But let the teacher set about *extending* that blessed truth. Let him picture a man, cross, ugly, besotted, selfish, greedy, his heart all rotten with passion and pride. Go through a day with him, from the sullen greetings in the morning and his breakfast-table quarrels, through his business hours all stern and crabbed, to his morose and unlovely evening. Ask the children how much he sees and enjoys of the beautiful world, how much he gets from noble books, what perception he has of the character of his charming wife and children. He is

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blind to all these things. Why? Because of his impure heart.

Show how this baseness follows him to church, holds him down from praying, weights his songs, dulls his vision of spiritual things. Ask them how it will be at death, when he goes out of this world with a soul taught to see only money and self. *How can he see God?*

Then go on to tell them of their loving, gentle-hearted mothers, and how much good *they* can see in this world, in their friends, in their children, because their hearts are unselfish and pure. How easily they pray. How cheerily they sing. How near God is to them. Will there be any difficulty in *their* seeing God in the next world, when they can see so much of him in this?

You have made quite a sermon out of that text. It has been extended largely, and yet the meaning of it has merely begun to dawn on those childish minds.

Suppose you had taught it in this way: "Verse eight. Read it, Tommy. Now, who are blessed, Mary? And why are they blessed, Willie? Now don't forget that, children. Pay attention. Always remember it. The pure in heart see God. Why should we be pure in heart, Lucy? And how can we see God, Susy? Now don't forget it, children. Pay attention. Always remember it. The pure in heart see God. What have we learned in this verse, Lizzie? Yes, that's right. You all want to be pure in heart,

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children, now don't you? Why? Yes, that's right. I see you have paid attention." But they haven't, as any such teacher may find out by a question next Sunday.

A teacher of children must learn the art of righteous padding. He must learn how to fill in outlines, how to expand texts. He must illustrate with imagery, parable, allegory, personal experience, use of material objects, pictures, action of the children.

Especially valuable is the last, when it can be used. The teacher's cry for attention might well be translated into the highwayman's, "Hold up your hands." At any rate, if you can manage to keep them busy with their hands, you have their eyes, tongues, and brains.

Set them to hunting up verses in their Bibles. You will have the experience of a friend of mine who came to me once after trying it, and despairingly said that the children now wanted to do nothing else. Nearly every verse can be illustrated by a stanza from some common song. Get the children to sing it softly, first making them see how the song fits the Bible. Make liberal use of concert repetition of Bible verses. There is nothing better than this good old device for unifying and freshening the attention of a class.

And pictures. Teachers do not yet know one-tenth of the teaching power of pictures. Take the Twenty-third Psalm for a familiar example. "The shepherd, want, green pastures, lie down, leadeth me,

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still waters, the paths of righteousness, the valley of the shadow, thy rod and staff, a table prepared, mine enemies, anointing, cup runneth over, the house of the Lord"—as you read that list did not fourteen pictures rise at once in your mind? Find them, and show them to the children. They will pay even better attention to your printed pictures than to your word-pictures.

Experience will soon teach the teacher, if his eyes are open, the need of copious illustration. Astronomers tell us that it is very difficult to see the smallest objects visible to us in the sky, if they are in the form of little dots. They may have dimensions very much smaller and still be visible easily, if they are extended into lines of light. So with the points of our lessons. They will miss attention entirely or gain it with difficulty, while they remain merely points. We must extend them, by the use of consecrated wits.

Chapter XXII

The Sunday-School and the Newspaper

ON several pages of this book I have hinted at the use of the newspaper in our teaching ; but the theme deserves a chapter to itself. An up-to-date teacher is respected, and it is largely the newspaper that brings one up to date. We must put our lessons into touch with life, and the newspaper is our modern compendium of life—very faulty, but all we have. The best illustration of the lesson is one your scholars find ; the next best, one you find yourself ; and only the third best, one found for you by the skilful writers of your lesson helps. The newspapers are mines of original illustrations.

They constitute, for example, a magazine of warnings. Hardly a number but tells of a defalcation sprung from gambling, of the ruin accomplished by the theater and dance-hall, of the mischief caused by sensational literature, and everywhere and always of the rum-fiend's devilish work. Why Saul fell, and David, and Solomon,—your scholars must know that ;

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but their sense of the reality of sin and its fearful power will be deepened by noting the fall of men and women in this present world, and learning what brought shipwreck to their souls. A misplaced switch last week threw a train from the track and killed a man. What a warning against carelessness! Early Wednesday morning a drunken woman was found asleep on an ash-pile, her little girl sobbing by her side. What a lesson on the evil wrought by rum! Of all the sins and faults against which the Bible utters its great warnings, there is none we may not illustrate freshly and vividly from the newspaper.

But that is only half, and the lower half. By sharp search we may find in our papers many a thrilling example of heroism and noble service. Would that our reporters more frequently chronicled the good! Yet here is a fire at which a fireman risked his life to save a little child. And here is a cashier that braved death rather than open the safe for the robbers. And here is a lad whose shoulder was dislocated by stopping a runaway horse. And here is a heroic rescue of men and women from a shipwreck. We do not get from the newspaper the daily acts of devotion and faithfulness so honored in the eye of heaven; but we do get the splendid deeds, the stirring, romantic victories, that will move the girls and boys to knightly action.

Newspapers, too, give an outlook over the world. The confining walls melt away, and your lesson takes wide sweeps under a broad sky. . Every session of

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Congress considers many matters of the highest import for the kingdom of God. Our great offices are filled with men of strong character, acting out upon a grand scale lives potent for good or evil. In the lands across the seas great events are occurring, each exhibiting some phase of godliness or sin. You will exalt the gospel mightily in the minds of your scholars if you can show them how its principles solve the problems of our government, and underlie all wise action of the nations of the world.

It has already been indicated how the temperance lesson, that quarterly bugbear of some teachers, may be illuminated by the newspaper. Thus also may the missionary lesson. So profoundly do missions affect any nation they touch, and so closely are they interwoven with its life, that whatever of importance befalls any people has its missionary bearings. The Sultan cannot massacre the Armenians, or France seize Madagascar, or Japan fight China, or Hawaii depose its queen, or a revolution occur in South America, without entanglement with the omnipresent missionaries of the cross. To make the scholars feel this through wise references to current events is immensely to broaden their conception of the church and its work.

Even beyond all this, our newspapers afford the teacher a vast supply of illustrative material. There are the carefully prepared biographies of the great men and women that pass away, printed with their portraits. There are sketches of the lives of living

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celebrities, with pictures of their faces and their homes. There are lectures and sermons, sometimes admirably reported, giving in a few bright paragraphs the gist of an hour's discourse. There are thousands of poems by the best modern authors. There are appropriate editorial comments on all the holidays, Christmas and New Year's, Easter and Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July. There are accounts of the latest wonderful inventions, each a pointed parable to one with eyes and a brain. And, with all its pictorial enormities, the newspaper often contains a portrait or a sketch worth using in our lesson half-hour.

In all this I am taking for granted, of course, that you subscribe to no sensational abomination, but to the best of our standard sheets, even if you must get it from some other city than your own. It must be a paper so clean that you can occasionally hand a copy to your scholars, and fearlessly set them to "reading up" on some theme helpful to the lesson. Besides, it must not be forgotten that our best religious weeklies are now genuine newspapers as well, and furnish admirable comments upon all important current events.

To use the newspaper to the best advantage in your teaching, you must have well in mind all the lesson themes for months in advance, since a striking event of to-day might not illustrate this week's lesson, but the lesson of five weeks ahead. Your best plan is to cut out each day the paragraphs and articles that seem likely to be of use, and preserve them

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in a series of envelopes. Mark one set of envelopes with the topics and dates of a year's lessons. Let another set contain the clippings arranged by subjects, as: "Love," "Faith," "Temperance," "Missions," "Theater," "Heroism," "Inventions." These will contain poems as well as prose. Some, rather than classify the bits of biography under the characteristics especially prominent in each case, will prefer to arrange them alphabetically, in a separate set of twenty-six envelopes. As the envelope for each week's lesson is used, distribute its contents through your permanent file. Frequently glance over your clippings to refresh your memory concerning them; otherwise they will become so much dead wood.

Not an unimportant result of all this is that it will teach your scholars to read the newspaper as a Christian should. In this great American university our scholars should be taught to skip the courses in evil and elect those in goodness.

And a final word,—which, indeed, no teacher is likely to need, though it must be said: keep the whole matter subordinate. It is not proposed to turn our Sunday-schools into classes for the study of current events. We have to do with one Life, and with that alone. We are teaching not all kinds of truth, but him who is the Truth. Whatever we admit into our teaching that does not exalt him and throw light on his life and doctrine is a harmful impertinence. We are not to study the lamp, but the Book that lies beneath it.

Chapter XXIII

On Taking Things for Granted

THE cliff-scaler, who lowers his comrade down the precipice, does not take for granted the fastening around the tree or the stoutness of the rope ; but the Sunday-school teacher too often throws his young people into the treacherous depths of thought and life with little care for their life-rope's integrity or moorings. More than once or twice or thrice in my own experience, after weeks and months of supposedly thorough intercourse with my scholars, an awkward question, better aimed by Heaven than by myself, has disclosed some fatal doubt, some fundamental misconception. I had been taking for granted that my boy really believed Christ to be divine, or that he had at least the beginnings of a conception of the Saviour's mission to the earth, or that he knew by experience the meaning of prayer, or that he actually had confidence in a future life.

I have in mind a fine, thoughtful fellow, graduate of a famous college and a church-member, whose

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very thoughtfulness, and the knowledge of his religious activity in former years, led me, when he entered my class, to take for granted his Christianity. After weeks of teaching, it was only a chance question, in private conversation, that led him to the frank admission that skeptical college friends had absolutely destroyed his faith in Christ and the Bible, leaving him with only a sad and bewildered hold on the God of nature. What Sunday-school teacher has not been startled thus with disclosures of his own carelessness in taking things for granted?

It is a mistake constantly to advertise skepticism by warning our scholars against it, but it is no mistake to arm them against it. No teacher has mastered his lesson until he has mastered every doubt regarding it that any of his scholars is likely to entertain. "Will this punishment seem unjust? this event fabulous? this person mythical? this doctrine unreasonable? this miracle unreal? this author apocryphal? these men and women mere creatures of imagination?" Such questions as these are important for the teacher to consider,—*to consider*, not ask in the class. Because to the teacher the account is more true and vivid than an extract from yesterday's newspaper, he takes it for granted that his scholars so regard it. They may put the lesson story in the same category as Baron Munchausen or "The Ancient Mariner," and such a teacher would be none the wiser.

I know of nothing *in the way of study* that is so capable of firing a Sunday-school teacher and class

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as Christian evidences. Remember that this also is a study of the Bible. Why is it ordinarily thought so dull? It is full of snap and point. Professor Fisher's short "Manual of Christian Evidences," published by Charles Scribner's Sons at seventy-five cents, stands next to my Bible as an aid and inspiration in teaching that Bible. I keep several copies, and all of them are usually in the hands of earnest scholars. Often when they are returned the compliment is, "That book helped me so much that I have bought a copy of my own." That means the conversion of a doubting Thomas. "Why!" exclaimed one such reader, "I never knew before that there was anything to prove Christianity but the Bible, or anything but the Bible to prove the Bible."

A teacher that is not in the habit of questioning persistently and searchingly can have no idea of the depth and at the same time the shallowness of the religious thinking of the average scholar. Far too many teachers prove everything by quoting the inspired Bible, taking it for granted that their scholars accept the Bible as inspired; or by referring to our divine Saviour, taking it for granted that their scholars believe Christ to be a divine Saviour. Our scholars are more shrewd than that. Their answers will be proper, but skepticism often lurks beneath, ready to spring up in open infidelity, secret scorn, or fruitless, formal morality.

Skepticism should never be anticipated, but it should *never* be neglected. It should never be dealt

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with before the class, if it can be dealt with in private. But it is a teacher's first duty to *know* the great truths of Christianity, and know *why* he knows them. It is his second duty to make certain that each of his scholars knows them, *and can prove them*.

“But we cannot cover the ground without taking things for granted.” *Cover the ground!* Superficial area, and superficial teaching!

Chapter XXIV

Utilizing the Late Scholar

THE late scholar is no blessing, and yet he is far from an unmixed evil. The wise teacher will get all the good he can out of him.

Of course, he is to be transformed into the early scholar, care being taken lest by mistake he be transformed into the scholar absent altogether. And during this process of transformation there is a small harvest of advantage to be tended.

Let his entrance be a danger signal. Don't act mad. Of course, the electric current of interest is flowing by this time, or never, and the late scholar rudely breaks it. But never mind. Better the total loss of your scholars' interest in the lesson than the loss of their respect for you.

Remember, too, that there may be a good excuse,—even late coming may mean earnest endeavor,—and premature impatience in such case will cause you dismayed repentance.

The late scholar cannot be ignored; don't try it.

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Sometimes we fiercely attempt to finish our sentences, or get answers to our last questions. The late scholar is a potent and aggressive fact, and cannot be got rid of in that way.

No. Accept the situation promptly and sensibly. Stop short at once, and greet the late comer heartily. Don't let him sneak into a back seat, but set him in the midst. See that he has a Bible or a lesson paper. Incorporate him. Then proceed thriftily to utilize him. He is your opportunity for a review. You probably need one at this stage of the lesson, anyway. Here is your chance for gathering up loose ends and binding all the truths thus far taught in a compact whole.

You may do it in this way: "Before you came in, Charley, we were talking about Christ's command to lay up treasures, not on earth, but in heaven. We've been deciding what some of the earth-treasures are. We've agreed that they include money and clothes and houses and studies and friends, and that we mustn't win any of these in such a way that they will belong merely to earth. You see? And now, class, can any one think of another earth-treasure?"

Or you may do it in this way: "Here's Charley. John, will you please tell him what we talked about at the beginning of the lesson? That's good. And Bess, tell him, please, what conclusion we have come to thus far. That's right. And now let us go on."

Similarly, all through the lesson, the late scholar may be your excuse for bringing up points mentioned

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at the opening of the hour, and needing repetition. "Something was said at the start which bears on that matter, and Charley wasn't here. Ned, please tell him what that was."

Bring him into the electric circle by a question as soon as you can. But remember that it takes time for him to become charged with interest and understanding as fully as the rest, and ask him easy questions at first, or, perhaps better, call on him to read a verse or two.

The late scholar's exit is fraught with as much danger as his entrance. You must utilize that also. Let your questioning be jolly and indirect: "Too much sleep this morning, Billy?" "Sorry, Ellen, that you couldn't start in with us"; "Some good points you missed at the opening, Fred."

If rightly used, this is an opportunity for learning of some need or temptation that besets your scholar. She may be lazy. He may be too fond of sleep. She may keep too late hours. He may be led astray by the Sunday morning papers. They may fail to see the value of the opening prayer and songs. You get fresh insight into their characters.

When Nature heals a broken bone, she makes it the stronger for the break. And so, though the late scholar seem to fracture sadly the interest of the lesson, the wise teacher will know how to mend the matter in such shrewd fashion as to knit the whole class more firmly together.

Chapter XXV

Side-Tracking the Teacher

EVEN the poorest teacher has a right to the course he has marked out for himself; even the smartest scholar has no right to side-track him.

Some scholars side-track their teacher merely to show that they understand how to use the switch; others do it by simply fooling with the switch, in pure carelessness and thoughtlessness; others really wish to bring the teacher nearer some private interest of their own.

Their motive must determine your treatment of them,—whether it is to be the brusqueness that rebukes conceit, the firm patience that resists carelessness, or the considerate postponement of questions that are prompted by a need.

But so far as its effect on the lesson is concerned, it makes no difference whether the teacher is side-tracked by a switch of gold or one of brass,—the lesson is “held up,” and often permanently.

It is not always easy to tell when these question-

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switches are open, and when they are closed,—when they will side-track you, and when they will merely salute you with a friendly rattle and let you pass ; the tokens are not so definite as on the red and white faces of the switch indicator. And yet you cannot engineer your class far without wrecking it, if you do not learn to read these question indicators, and tell at a glance whither they will send you.

But what is the use of reading them, if you are to be at their mercy anyway? How shall we circumvent these mischief-making switchers ?

Some would abruptly take away their switch-keys, and practically dismiss them from the force ; that is, they would prohibit questioning altogether. But this is capitulating to the problem. Some would swing smilingly off upon the side-track, as if they had intended to go there. But that is surrendering their preparation. Some would rush precipitately into the side-track and through it, expecting to find at the other end a switch back to the main track. But thus the lesson is usually derailed.

On the railroad, of course, there is authority ; but in the Sunday-school the less appeal to authority the better. No, the likeness, to a large extent, stops here ; for in the Sunday-school the only way to deal with a scholar who side-tracks the train is to win him by friendly arts to become your helper rather than your hinderer.

In the first place, many a lesson is side-tracked because the main track is not made sufficiently plain

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to the scholars' apprehension. When the lesson winds like a snake, with a purpose known only to the teacher (if to him), small blame to the scholars if they switch it off the wrong way by a question. Strike out in a bee-line at the start, and stick to it. No one will then ignorantly side-track you.

In the second place, many a lesson is side-tracked because the teacher does not act as if he cared whether he ever arrived anywhere or not. Lackadaisical in manner and matter, his carelessness provokes equal carelessness in his scholars. Let him, on the other hand, appear to be eagerly on the scent of some truth, on the track of some fact, following the path of some event or demonstration, and his scholars will, in the main, be "forth and right on" with him.

In the third place, many a lesson is side-tracked because the scholars are not on the side of the teacher. Of course, when the two parties are at cross-purposes, things run no more evenly than they would if the engineer of a train were out of touch with his crew. The teacher must get up an *esprit de corps*, a class spirit, or his class will be perpetually flying off from him on a tangent. His scholars must be interested in him, if they are to be interested with him. He must draw them to himself, or they will never pull together. Friendship in his crew must take the place of authority in the railroad crew; and the more friendship, the less side-tracking.

In the fourth place, there must be frankness of

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speech. A misplaced switch on a railway, if it provoked no further collision, would at least provoke a clash of words. There is no reason why, if a question is too far aside from the main purpose of the lesson, the teacher should not frankly say so. He may lay it away in his mind for later discussion; he may promise to talk it over after the session; but no fear of being thought incompetent, or unsympathetic, or arbitrary, should induce him to turn aside from his one purpose. The wise teacher will make many exceptions, of course, to every rule; but nevertheless, a rule of the wise teacher it must be, to say to every irrelevant question, kindly and tactfully, yet firmly, "Get thee behind me." For the half-hour is all too short. The impressions made are all too confused. The instruction given is all too fragmentary. However wise and earnest the individual moments may be, there is danger that the half-hour may pass into oblivion at once, unless these individual moments have been wise and earnest to some single, distinct end.

There is a place for switches in our Sunday-school lesson. The train must be made up. Side excursions must often be made. There are sundry connecting lines whose cars must be switched in. But in genuine Sunday-school railroading there must be no delay upon side-tracks. Let all teachers, as far as possible, run express.

Chapter XXVI

The Problem of the Visitor

THE analogy for the class-building of some teachers is the arch. Every scholar is needed in his place, or the class-work collapses; and of course there is no room for a visitor. The analogy for the true class is the electric circle. Join hands all around, and ever room and electricity for one more.

I do not mean to imply that the visitor is not a problem. He is an intrusion on your familiar little group. He is a foreign and constraining element. He is a problem, however, that you cannot get rid of, but must solve.

Utilize the visitor. Go to work in such way as to transform him into a scholar; or if circumstances forbid that, at any rate win from his visit fresh interest and inspiration for the class. Every visitor is an angel of opportunity, entertained—how often!—unawares.

Let your reception of the visitor be to your class an object-lesson in Christian courtesy. If he comes

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in alone, and awkwardly drops into a distant seat, do not wait for the busy superintendent to get around to him. If he is of fit age for your class, drop everything,—the most valuable lesson you could be teaching is not so valuable as this practical example,—and go to the stranger. Introduce yourself cordially to him, and him to the rest of the class, or, at any rate, to his neighbors.

Sometimes resign the pleasure of seeking the visitor yourself, and send some persuasive scholar, thus letting him have a taste of the joy of giving invitations. Possibly it will help him into the habit of giving invitations outside.

Get your scholars to hand the visitor a lesson leaf or a Bible. Show them that he is their visitor as well as yours. They will soon learn to be delightfully courteous. But an iceberg teacher makes an iceberg class.

And now you are on trial before your class. They will judge you by the interest or the apathy of the visitor. They are watching him, ready to be ashamed or proud of you.

Yet do not fear your visitor. He may come from a better school and a better teacher. He may be critical and sneering and skeptical. Nevertheless, he is your opportunity. Rejoice in it.

If he is a better scholar than any in your class, what a valuable and inspiring example he may be made to them! If a poorer scholar, what an opportunity to make your class feel the joy and power of teaching some one!

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If he is sneering and critical, the indignation of the class will bind them more enthusiastically to you. If he is skeptical, what a chance for examining and strengthening foundations!

The visitor is a mine of new ideas and experiences. Old thoughts take on novel forms when fitted to him. His questions and answers exhibit needs in your own class, unobserved because unfamiliar. His ways and words freshen the stagnant class atmosphere.

And so he is your chance to get out of ruts and into new ways and moods. Bless Providence for him, and question him vigorously, making use of him to the utmost.

Two cautions, however. Let your questioning be very clear. He is unused, remember, to your little mannerisms, and must not be confused by idiosyncrasies. And in your exultation over him do not neglect the others, nor seem to change your plans for the visitor, or to be striving to show off before him.

Final advantage of the visitor: Teach your scholars to ask him heartily to come again, not forgetting to do so cordially yourself. Committees on church extension, remember, are trained in the Sunday-school.

Thus you see that the value of the visitor does not depend upon the visitor so much as might be imagined. Yet just a word on how to visit well.

Go to give good. Take hearty interest in the lesson, and have some thought to add to the discussion. Better yet, have some earnest question to ask. And ask it. If you come from another school, consider

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yourself a Christian ambassador bearing greetings of brotherly good will and common endeavor.

Go to get good. Be unobtrusive and teachable. And especially, show that you have received good. Express appreciation, after the lesson, to teacher and scholars. Then will you be blessed, and, changing the meaning of the word "visitation," these words from the Wisdom of Solomon may be applied to you: "In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble."

Chapter XXVII

“Under Petticoat Government”

ONE of the brightest women in the United States, a woman well known to the Protestant churches of the world, was groaning to me the other day: “What *shall* I do with those boys in my Sunday-school class? They are just at the age when they think they know a little more than any *woman*. They need a man. Don't you think the superintendent ought to remove them from under petticoat government?”

This cry, that came so strangely from a woman of her ability and fame, comes also from a throng of baffled Sunday-school teachers. The answer would be easy, if there were anything like as many good Sunday-school teachers among the men as among the women. As it is, however, most boy classes must be assigned either to a distasteful petticoat government, or to an incompetent pantaloon government, or—cast adrift until, long years afterward, they drop anchor in the haven of matrimony, and happily, perchance, appear once more in the Sunday-school, in the “Bible class.”

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The remedy, however, though not easy, is manifest. The boys do not need a man, but they do need in their teacher certain manly qualities that could be incorporated in a woman's teaching. These qualities all women whom the Lord of the Sunday-school has set over a class of his boys, should seek to get.

The most obvious of them, I think, is a certain dignity and reserve that show themselves as well in refraining from scolding as in declining to pat on the head or hold by the hand. Boys of the undefinable age we are talking about highly appreciate the title “Mr.” Their greatest horror is petting; their greatest aversion is nagging. A young man, set to teach a class of boys, will approach them with a sense of comradeship; will at once make himself, if he is a teacher at all, “hail fellow well met” among them; and yet, as the boys say, “there is no nonsense about him.”

It is far better—bad as that is—to talk over the heads of boys than to talk down to them. It is far better to use too few words than too many. If a teacher would hold boys, she must be concise, straightforward, businesslike. Indeed, the latter adjective comes near to being the key to the situation. Boys dislike fussiness, and wordiness, and beating about the bush. Woman teachers that are eager for boys' souls will take a long step toward their astonished approbation if they school themselves to brevity, dignity, and “business.”

Set the boys to work. Imitate common-school

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methods. In the public school woman teachers hold the boys, and win their honest hearts. It is largely because here there are definiteness of purpose and firm continuity of aim. Boys are easily mastered by a taskmaster who is master of her task. Boys that cannot be won by Sunday-school preaching are readily won by Sunday-school *teaching*. Lay down a distinct course of work, with a goal in fair view, and they will gird up the loins of their minds; but they refuse to follow you in aimless wanderings through a thicket. To learn in chronological order the seventy-five prominent events in Christ's life; to trace through the Bible the doctrine of the atonement; to commit to memory every Scripture passage bearing on the temperance problem; to write a six-hundred-word abstract of the Book of Genesis; to make a classification of the Psalms by topics; to compile the Bible proverbs that have to do with money and wealth-getting; to make a diagram graphically depicting the history of the Old Testament Hebrews; to write out the Ten Commandments, and place in parallel columns the New Testament enlargements and interpretations thereof,—these are samples of the work boys would like to do. They would give high praise to a teacher who conducted them through such tasks. They would say that she "meant business."

And that leads me to mention another point in which woman teachers are more likely than men to fail, though both are far too weak,—the use of evidence, of proof. This is a hobby of mine, but it is

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the boys themselves, and recollections of my own boyhood, that have set me on the hobby. Wherever a thing is susceptible of proof, boys want it proved to them. If it is not susceptible of proof, they want *that* proved to them, also. Woman's traditional “because” does not commend itself to the lawyerlike boys. Fresh from their botany in the public schools, they refuse to take on faith the Cana miracle. Ready for their physiology or physics the next day, they want more proof than a “say so” that a leper was ever healed by a word or that Peter really walked on the waves. “It is in the Bible” is not enough; they must know why they must believe the Bible.

Now I am not so foolish as to advise any one to suggest skepticism to a boy, and I know that there is a way of handling Scripture evidences that serves rather to raise doubt than to confirm faith; but I have enough of the boy in me to be sure that in no way can a teacher more highly exalt both herself and Christianity in the eyes of the boys than by insisting on the reasonableness of both. I had the best of Sunday-school teachers, quite a score of them, women and men; yet until full manhood I wrestled all alone with a concealed and absolute skepticism that would not down until I had hunted out for myself the many overwhelming proofs of the resurrection of Christ. If any of my twenty teachers had set those proofs with lawyerlike force and directness before my boyish mind, I should have been saved some very dark years that came near making an infidel of me altogether.

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Because I think that boys feel this need of proof and evidence more than girls, and that women are less ready to meet the need than men, I have ventured to add this suggestion to my list.

And that list may close with only one point further. Boys like to be taught by men, because through men they get a telescope-view into the life-work that lies before them. Men teachers draw their illustrations from mannish things, from business life, from inventions, from politics, from commerce, from the law. Where a woman might illustrate dishonesty by apple-stealing, thereby causing every urchin before her to exclaim "Chestnut!" under his breath, a man would be more likely to make some discussion about watering stock or falsifying entries. A man is more likely than a woman to render Scripture vivid and practical by reference to current events, dropping a word here and there about the war between China and Japan, about Gladstone's retirement, about the Manitoba school question, about the Honduras lottery,—just a word, but the boys prick up their ears. A woman might compare Gideon with David, but a man would be far more likely to compare him with Parkhurst.

And now my point is that the boy needs both,—both David and Parkhurst. There is no reason why the woman teacher cannot give the boy everything he could get from a man teacher, and more. It is easy to appear to a boy quite a Solon regarding current events. It is not so very hard, by the exercise of a consecrated imagination, to place yourself by the

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boy's side on the outskirts of the great, wide world of busy activities he is soon to enter, and feel his impatience to be there and his hunger for any tidings from that charmed country. Show him how Christianity untangles the skeins of business, is the master-key to all true politics, the foundation of law, the compass of commerce, the force of civilization. Read the newspapers wisely, and find out what is going on in the world. Read wisely the hearts of your boys, and find out what is going on in that world. Lift manfully over both worlds the banner of Christ.

One point at a time, with cheerful persistence, the teacher that “means business” will win for her teaching these adaptations to the needs of her boys. And in the process, losing nothing of womanliness, she will have nobly broadened her own life, while as its result she will have won a double hold, both a woman's hold and a man's hold, on the hearts of the boys.

Chapter XXVIII

The Teacher's Three Graces

THE teacher's manner must be heart-born. It must not become mannerism, which is head-born, and never reaches hearts. "Manner maketh the man," and also the teacher,—half-way, at least. If we suspect, however, that our manner is defective, the manner itself is the last thing to look at; we must look at our heart. That is the place to get the change.

Three heart qualities produce the ideal teacher's manner. One of these is *earnestness*. If you would make on your scholars an impression that will last beyond the hour, you yourself must be deeply impressed with the eternal years. To move their life, keep before you their death. That is hard to do, when confronted by such abounding youthful vigor and vitality. Become an advocate, a pleader, with eternal life as the stake. Learn to know deeply the great central truths of sin, atonement, sanctification. Aim at radical and positive results in confession, testimony, spirituality, character, and conduct, and press toward these as the genuine verdict on your teaching.

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The second quality is *cheeriness*. We are prophets of awful alternatives, but we are also ministers of the most blessed joy. Happiness is the best recommendation of Christianity. In it center all the Christian evidences. Learn by heart all the promises; they are better teaching weapons than the prohibitions and warnings. Keep a smile very close to the surface, and improve every fair chance to laugh. The teacher that is in earnest, need never be afraid to be merry. Permit no exaggeration of the facts of wickedness, either in them or in others. The more stormy the day and the fewer in attendance, the cheerier be you.

The third quality is *sympathy*. The true teacher has, or gets, the poet's ability to project himself into the lives of others. He keeps invisible, tactful antennæ playing in all directions, feeling this one's coming embarrassment before it arrives, conscious of that one's eager assent before it lights his eyes, exploring homes and occupations and character in order to adapt question to scholar. Without argument or plan, but by instinctive appreciation of differing personality, the true teacher assumes dignity with this pupil, *bonhomie* with that. So far is he from treating all alike, that he never treats even the same person in the same way two days in succession, knowing, by feeling rather than theory, that no one—especially no child—is the same person two days in succession.

These are the teacher's three graces: earnestness, born of faith and unsatisfied until it has inspired an

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equal faith; cheeriness, born of hope, and hope-creating; and sympathy, born of love, which is the greatest of all. These in the heart blossom outwardly into the perfect teaching manner,—earnestness to arrest, cheeriness to attract, and sympathy to hold. “Covet earnestly the *best* gifts.”

Chapter XXIX

Something to Belong to

I BELIEVE in the organization of Sunday-school classes, because it fosters class spirit. If it is a good thing to have a class, it is a good thing for the class to have a spirit. This class spirit should promote the school spirit, just as the *esprit de corps* of a company enhances the loyalty of soldiers to their regiment.

When a scholar has signed a constitution, he feels that he belongs to the school. Lacking this feeling, he will not be long with the school or with anything else.

In the simple constitution of my class (which is a class of young men) are provisions for a porch, a lookout, and a social committee.

The porch committee watches the morning congregation for strange young men, and invites them to come to Sunday-school. The lookout committee seeks throughout town and church for permanent additions to the class, whom, through its chairman, it proposes for membership. This is a great gain.

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When a teacher urges people to join his class he is inviting them to the gospel, certainly, but he is also inviting them to himself. In the first cause he is as bold as a lion, but in the second many a modest soul is naturally, even though foolishly, bashful. Happy the teacher whose scholars are zealous in this vital service, for him so delicate and for them so blessed!

The voting in of new members, with the subsequent producing of the constitution for signatures, is a little ceremony as useful for the old scholars in reminding them of their class autonomy as it is inspiring to the new scholars. A hearty word of welcome from the teacher to the new-comers gives them a formal and public installation. They have indeed taken on themselves a new function.

The social committee will greatly add to the efficiency of any class. Monthly class socials are genuine means of grace. Our socials are thus managed: Each social has a solid backbone, consisting of a paper or talk by some member of the class, detailing little-known points in his own business. Of a neighboring class similarly organized, one is a young architect, another works in a rope-walk, a third holds an important position in a newspaper office, a fourth is in the leather business, the teacher of the class is a judge. Utilizing the experiences of their own members and friends, this class has held quite remarkable socials. It has found the contribution of the clerk in a furniture store as interesting as that of the young banker. The class have been wonderfully knit to-

Something to Belong to

gether by the bonds of a common and a widening interest. After these papers or talks (which are often appropriately illustrated), come discussion and questions, followed by games or light refreshments. By occasional joint socials of this kind we hope to draw together this class and my own. Of course, this is only one out of a myriad schemes of entertainment that could be devised for these class socials. The point the shrewd teacher will notice is that it is the scholars themselves who plan these socials, and who thus take into their own hands the creation of a warm, helpful class atmosphere. Every teacher should know that in making new scholars feel at home it is hardly his own sociability, but that of his scholars, that counts.

If the class is thus organized, the teacher must guard the authority of his class president as jealously as his own. If you want your class officers to feel genuine responsibility, it must be genuine responsibility that you put upon them. Give up to the president, during the conduct of business, your place in front of the class. Wait to be recognized by him before you speak. Make few motions. Inspire others to take the initiative.

The election of officers should come every six months, and it is best to bring about a thorough rotation in office. Improve every chance to emphasize the class organization. If your school arrangements permit, vote every month on the disposal of the class collections. If you must be absent a Sunday, ask

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the class to elect a substitute teacher, and ask the president to inform the substitute of his election. An alternate should be chosen also, to make the thing sure. This little device serves to make the scholars as loyal to the substitute teacher as to their own, for they have made him their own. In the course of the lessons, also, a wide-awake teacher will frequently mention and emphasize the class organization.

Of course the whole plan will fall flat if the teacher wholly delegates to his scholars any or all of these lines of work. He also must invite the strangers, if he expects his scholars to do so. He also must seek for new members, if he would inspire them to do the same. Without his sociableness they will soon become frigid. The teacher alone has the dipper of water that starts the pump. Any contrivance that lessens his responsibility lessens his success.

But the plan I have outlined has value, not because it permits the teacher to do less, but because it incites the scholars to do vastly more. An ounce drawn out is better than a ton put in. One thing you get them to do is a greater triumph than a dozen things you do much better for them.

Chapter XXX

Through Eye-Gate

BEFORE his listless and restless audience the lecturer took in his hand a piece of chalk, turned to the blackboard, and touched it. Instantly he had the eager attention of all. He did nothing with the chalk; had not intended to do anything; he carried his point with it, nevertheless.

A teacher, plus a bit of chalk, is two teachers. And any one may double himself thus, if he choose to take a little pains.

Surely there need be no hesitation as to the materials. If you can have a blackboard, that is fine. I myself like best a board fastened to the wall, and a second board hinged to this after the fashion of a double slate. The outside may be used for "standing matter," and the inside opened up for the surprises.

But this is a great luxury. A portable, flexible blackboard will answer, if your class is away from the wall. You can roll it up and carry it home to practise there. You can use both sides of it. Such blackboards may be obtained now for two dollars.

Not even a flexible blackboard, however, is essen-

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tial. A slate will serve you admirably, and some of the best chalk-talkers use simple sheets of manilla paper tacked to ordinary pine boards.

Then, as to the chalk, by all means use colored crayons. It is easy to learn effective contrasts of colors, and bright hues will increase many fold the attractiveness of your pictures and diagrams. But these crayons need not be of the square variety, sold especially for such work at thirty-five cents a box. They produce beautiful results, but the ordinary schoolroom box of assorted colors will serve your turn admirably and cost much less.

And if the materials are readily obtained, so is the artistic skill. Trust to the active imaginations of the children. Remember in their own drawings how vivid to them are the straight lines that stand for men, the squares that represent houses, the circles with three dots that set forth faces with eyes and mouth. I once saw Mrs. Crafts teach the parable of the Good Samaritan in a most fascinating way to some little tots, and her blackboard work was merely some rough ovals, each drawn half through its neighbor, to represent a chain of love,—love to papa, love to mamma, to sister, brother, friend, teacher,—*neighbor*. And as circle after circle was briskly added, every child was filled with delight. That same parable of the Good Samaritan I once saw perfectly illustrated—for all practical purposes—by four squares, each with two parallel lines curving from one upper corner to the opposite lower one, to represent the descent of the

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Jericho road, while the various scenes were depicted with the aid of short, straight lines, the man fallen among thieves being a horizontal line, the priest and Levite being stiffly upright and placed on appropriate points in the road, while the line for the Samaritan was leaning over as if helping his fallen brother rise! Surely that series of drawings was not beyond the artistic skill of any teacher.

One of the beauties of such simple work is that it may be dashed off in the presence of the scholars, while more elaborate pictures must be prepared beforehand; and half the value of blackboard work is in the attention excited by the moving chalk. I use the expression "dashed off," but I do not want to imply careless work. The straight lines should be as straight as you can make them without a ruler, the circles as true circles as can be drawn without a string, and the stars should have equal points. The simpler the drawing, the more need that every mark should have its mission and fulfill it well. A confused scrawl will only make mental confusion worse confounded. Don't be satisfied with rough work, or it will constantly become rougher. Try to do better all the time.

Of course, this means home practice, even for the simplest of exercises, like Mrs. Crafts' links of the love-chain. The nearer the links are to perfect ovals, the better. The more nicely they are shaded on one side, the more distinct will be the impression of a chain. And the more rapidly they can be drawn, the more tense will be the children's interest. A few easy

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lessons in drawing, from some public-school teacher or some text-book, will prove of inestimable value, —lessons enough to give you at least an idea of perspective, so that you can make a house or a box stand out from the board, and know which sides to shade of the inside of a door. Make such simple beginnings as I have indicated, and determine to advance, however slowly. It is hard to draw a man, but not so difficult if you are willing to begin with a little circle for the head, an oval for the body, and two straight lines for legs.

But even if you do not draw at all, it is well worth while to use chalk. Almost magical effects may be produced by a single sentence, sometimes a single word, *written* on the board. If your lesson is the last chapter of the Bible, the one word "Come!" will be blackboard work enough. Add to it, if you will, at the close of the recitation, this earnest question: "Why not to-day?" Every lesson has its key-word or its key-sentence. Write it large on your scholars' hearts by writing it large upon the blackboard.

In such work, as in drawing, you may begin with simple writing (your best script, however!) and go on to as high a degree of elaborateness as you fancy. A printer's book of samples will introduce you to fascinating and varied forms of letters. Your colored chalks may be used in exquisite illumination. You may learn from penmen their most bewitching scrolls. And all of this will be enjoyed by the children, and will contribute to the impressiveness of the truth, *pro-*

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vided you are jealous to keep it subordinate to the truth. Otherwise, plain longhand is to be preferred to the end of the chapter.

Another easy way to use the blackboard—still without venturing on drawing—is by constructing diagrams. What a key to Scripture chronology, for instance, is furnished your scholars when you draw a horizontal line to represent the four thousand years from Adam to Christ, bisect it for Abraham, bisect the last half for Solomon, bisect the third quarter for Moses, and continue to bisect as long as a famous man stands at the bisecting-point! How it clears up the life of Christ to draw two circles, the inner one for Jerusalem, the outer for Nazareth, dividing them into thirty-three parts for the years of our Saviour's life, and running a curved line in and out according as his journeys took him to Nazareth and beyond its circle, or back to Jerusalem at the feast-times! Such circles will also serve to depict graphically Paul's missionary journeys, the outer circle representing Antioch. Any series of historical events may well be strung along a vertical line divided into decades, and parallel series, as in the history of the northern and southern kingdoms, along two parallel verticals. An outline map, such as the teacher may draw from memory, will furnish an excellent basis for another kind of diagram, the progress of persons or of series of events being traced from place to place by dotted lines, a different color for each person or journey or group of incidents.

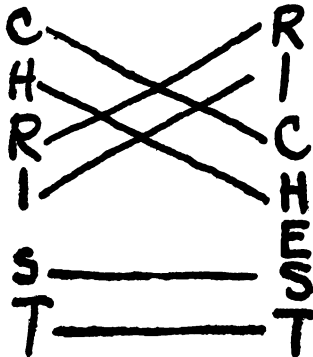
Acrostics furnish still another use for the blackboard.

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For example, draw out from the class by questions a list of the prominent characteristics of David. He was

Daring
Active
Vigilant
Inspired
Dutiful

Not until the list is completed does the class see that its initial letters spell David's name. You have attained the element of surprise, so valuable in work of this sort. Again, in a lesson on the rich young man, or on Dives and Lazarus, or on Zaccheus, write in a vertical column the letters of Christ's name, and draw straight lines to the right in various directions, as shown in the following diagram. Transferring the letters, or getting some scholar to transfer them, to the points indicated, you quickly insert an E, and it reads: "Christ—richest."



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The application is obvious, and will never be forgotten.

Often, in seeking for such an effective presentation of a lesson's truth, we hit upon alliteration, and then our blackboard work is easy. Three P's:

P P P

Fill them out, as the lesson proceeds, thus:

P^{harisee}_{ublican} P^r_{ayed} P^{ompously}_{enitently}

And often, again, our form will be based upon similar terminations or beginnings of words, such as:

Solomon { choosing
reigning
sinning

Suggestions and examples of such work might be indefinitely multiplied. It is one of the easiest, yet one of the most effective, methods of fixing the points of a lesson.

The earnest teacher will be drawn irresistibly from the use of the chalk in diagrams, acrostics, and the like, to simple drawings; and by this time he will realize the importance of simplicity. A set of steps, for instance, is easy to draw; we may use only the profile; but the drawing will fix forever in your scholars' minds the events in Solomon's life. To a certain point the steps are all upward. Yellow chalk shows them to be golden. A word written over each step

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gives the event it symbolizes. On a sudden the steps turn downward, become a dirty brown, each representing a sin, and break short off as Solomon takes his terrible fall.

Who cannot draw a number of rough circles? They will stand for the stones thrown at Stephen. A word or initial written in each will represent the different kinds of persecutions that assail faithful Christians in our modern days. Who cannot draw a shepherd's crook, and write alongside it the points of the Twenty-third Psalm, or the ways in which Christ is the Good Shepherd? Who cannot draw a large wineglass, and write inside it some of the evils that come out of it? Who cannot draw a rectangle for a letter, and write upon it a direction, to make more vivid some of the epistles? or a trumpet inside seven circles, to brighten up the lesson on the fall of Jericho? As a rule, the very best chalk-talks are the simplest, and require the least skill in drawing.

But how to get the ideas? Where to find the pictures?

Of course, in the first place, from the books of first-rate chalk-talkers, such as Pierce's "Pictured Truth," Frank Beard's "The Blackboard in the Sunday-school," and Belsey's "The Bible and the Blackboard" (an English book). Of course, also, from the many admirable periodicals that publish blackboard hints, such as the "Lesson Illustrator," the "Sunday-school Times," and the teachers' magazines of the various denominations. Get hints also from

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the blackboard work of the public school and the kindergarten, as to manner, if not as to matter.

But as for the design, your own is the best for you, and not another's. Study all the blackboard work you can find, and retain whatever gravitates to you; but your own original design is the one you will best understand, and in presenting it you will have more of that enthusiasm which makes success.

Learn to find pictures all through the Bible. I have just been searching my mind for a Bible text that promised nothing in the way of a picture. At last I thought that "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" would do. But in another second two pictures popped into my mind. I saw a river whose further bank was beautiful with flowers and trees, the paradise of "the glory of God," and across the river a bridge—lacking its final portion. I saw a ladder reaching up into some golden clouds back of which shone heaven, the city of "the glory of God"; but all the top rounds of the ladder were missing. Bridge and ladder had "come short." God's hand was needed, reaching across, reaching down, to help us over the sin-gap into "the glory of God." I do not believe it possible to find any Bible texts, still less any twelve consecutive verses of the Bible, that do not hide somewhere a capital picture.

Read your Bible pictorially. Make sketches everywhere upon the margin. For practice, often take some passage sure to come up in the International Lessons, such as Psalm 1, Isaiah 53, Proverbs 3,

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Matthew 5, Luke 2, John 14, Acts 9, Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 13, Hebrew 11, James 3. Delve into the passage, meditate long over it, and see how many pictures you can get out of it.

Of the greatest assistance will be a book,—indexed as to texts, and also as to subjects, such as “temperance,” “missionary,” “resurrection,” “courage,”—in which you will preserve every drawing you make, and all the most suggestive blackboard hints you clip from the teachers’ magazines, together with simple outlines of all sorts of common subjects. These last will be particularly useful. There will be a ladder, an anvil, a horse, a lily, a broom, a fountain,—anything likely to be of use for a symbol. You will clip these from advertisements, catalogues, the illustrated papers and magazines, and you will find your collection useful in many ways.

I have spoken as if the teacher should do all the blackboard work. On the contrary, he should do none that he can get his scholars to do for him. No matter if they do not do it as well as he. Get them to practise beforehand. Let them begin with only the simplest work; they will soon astonish you with their proficiency. And the class will take far more interest in a poor drawing by one of their own number than in a good drawing by you.

Yes, and even when you preside at the blackboard yourself, give the class pencils and paper occasionally, and let them copy what you draw. Their attention will be assuredly fixed, and an ineffaceable impres-

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sion made on their memory. The drawings they complete, however crude, they will be glad to carry home to show their parents, and treasure as souvenirs of the lesson, or keep, if you choose, against the coming review day. If you use this method, you will soon come to cherish a deeper liking for that prime pedagogical virtue, simplicity.

For a final word: Take pains that your word-pictures keep pace with your chalk. Don't *ask* your class what you have drawn—that might lead to embarrassing results! *Tell* them. Put in all sorts of graphic little touches, even though you cannot draw a tenth of what you are talking about. The man on the Jericho road—how full of fear he was as he walked; how he whistled to keep up his courage; how one robber peeped from behind a rock, and another whispered, "He's coming!" how they sprang out, and he ran, and a third rascal sprang out in front and knocked him down; how he shouted, "Help! Thieves! Help!" and how only the echo answered him in that lonely place—all this must have happened many a time on that Jericho road, and you have a perfect right to stimulate with such natural and inevitable details the imagination of the children.

That is what they are for—both our word-picturing and our chalk-picturing: not to exhibit our nimbleness of wit or of finger, but to quicken the minds of the children,—that alone,—and make them more eager in the pursuit of truth.

Chapter XXXI

Foundation Work

THE work of the primary department lies at the foundation of all Sunday-school work. This does not mean that there is no chance of a child's becoming a good Bible scholar and a noble Christian if he misses the primary training, but it does mean that without a flourishing primary department a school can scarcely be called successful, while with it half the success of the school is assured. The primary teacher molds the soft clay; her successor with the child must cut the hard marble.

Teaching that thus lies at the foundation must deal with fundamental matters, with the greatest lives of the Bible, the great outlines of history, the great essentials of doctrine, the root principles of morality. Details are to be filled in later. The danger is that the teacher will attempt to teach too much, will expect the little ones to know about Hagar when it is enough for them to know about Isaac; or about Jeremiah, when Daniel would be sufficient; or about

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the order in which Paul wrote his letters, when it might well suffice for them to know that Paul wrote them.

But though many questions are too hard to ask, no question is too easy, and no point is so simple that in these first days you may safely take it for granted. Laugh if you please, but I do not think that even these days of sand-maps and pricked cards have produced a method much more helpful for the primary teacher than the old questioning of my boyhood, over and over repeated: "Who was the first man?" "Who was the strongest man?" "Who was the oldest man?" and the like.

The primary teacher's right-hand man is named Drill,—Ernest Drill. No mnemonic help—that *is* a help—is to be despised. Rhymes giving in order the books of the Bible, the Commandments, Beatitudes, list of the twelve apostles, may wisely be used. No memory verse or golden text, once learned, should be allowed to lapse into that easy pit, a child's quick forgetfulness. Better one thing remembered than a hundred things forgotten. Foundation-stones are few and simple, but they must be firm.

Now the first essential, if one would do this foundation work successfully, is to get a room to work in. A room that lets in floods of sunshine and fresh air. A room with pretty pictures and bright mottoes on the wall, with canary songs and blooming plants. A room with little chairs, graded to the scholars' little heights. A room with a visitors' gallery for the

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mothers. Or, if your church was not blessed with a Sunday-school architect, then such a room in a house next door or across the street, to which your class may withdraw after the opening exercises. Or, if your work must be done in the church, as so much primary work must be, then a temporary room, shut off by drawn curtains, or even by a blackboard and a screen, is far better than the distractions of the open school.

The blackboard just mentioned, at any rate, the room should contain; the shrewd use of it will create an intense interest that will almost cause oblivion of the most distracting surroundings. A padded board gives the best effects,—such a board as you yourself may easily and cheaply make with a pine backing, a few layers of cheap soft cloth, and a covering of blackboard cloth nailed firmly over all. In the chapter on blackboard work I have tried to show how easily possible, and at the same time how valuable, is the use of the blackboard. If the children are too small to read, they may at least know their letters, and recognize S for Saul and P for Peter, and a cross for Christ, while the immense resources of simple drawings are always open to you.

The primary teacher is fortunate, nowadays, in being able to buy, at slight cost, series of pictures illustrating each quarter's lessons. These pictures are either colored brightly or simple black and white, and vary in size from four or five square feet to the little engravings in the Sunday-school paper. Whatever

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picture is used should be hidden until it is time to exhibit it, and produced with a pretty show of mystery and triumph. Some teachers hang these pictures, after use, in a "picture-gallery," where the children may become familiar with them, and to this gallery they may be sent for frequent reference against the coming review day.

After all, the primary teacher's chief reliance for purposes of illustration must be natural objects. In this reliance we merely imitate the example of the great Teacher. The objects to be used will most often be suggested by the lesson text itself. A lily, a vine, seed, leaven, a door, a sickle, a cake, a cup, grass,—are not each of these objects at once associated in your mind with passages of Scripture? Hunt out the suggested objects, and simply hold them before the children as you talk about the lesson, and you will find them a wonderful assistance.

A more difficult process is to discover illustrative objects when none are directly suggested in the text. In a temperance lesson, for instance, there may be no mention of the wine-cup, yet you will bring a glass, fill it with wine-colored water, and place in it slips of paper cut to resemble snakes. On each is written some fearful result of drinking alcoholic liquors; and after the children have drawn forth, with pincers, one after the other, and read what is written upon it, they will not soon forget how many evils come out of the wine-cup.

You may be talking about the imprisonment of

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John the Baptist. Produce a pasteboard chain, painted black on one side. Each link tells in red letters one of the horrors of his imprisonment,—loneliness, fear, despair, and the like. Turn over the chain and show the underside gilded, the links reading, "More faith," "Near to God," "God's favor," "Courage," "Eternal reward." There was a bright side, after all.

You are on the stumbling-block lesson, and you bring in some awkward, rough wooden blocks, on which you tack labels as the lesson proceeds: "A spiteful temper," "A gossiping tongue," "Envy," "Suspicion," "Swearing," "Treating to strong drink," "Playing marbles for 'keeps.'" "

You are teaching about the paralytic let down through the roof. It has not required many minutes, with pasteboard, scissors, and glue, to construct a dainty little model of an old-time Jewish house, outside stairs, inner court, overhanging court roof, and all. And how the little model illuminates the story! The jail in which Peter was imprisoned, the table around which the Last Supper was celebrated, the Tabernacle, the Temple,—from the many excellent pictures and descriptions obtainable, even quite ambitious models are possible of manufacture. And once made, they are aids and joys forever.

The sand-map has become justly popular. It is easily formed, requiring only a shallow tray, some sharp, clean sand, pieces of looking-glass for lakes and seas, blue yarn for rivers, some rocks for moun-

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tains, wooden blocks for houses, dried moss for trees, little toy men, boats, horses, and such readily found apparatus.

In turn you can build up, with its accommodating materials, the Sea of Galilee and the scene of the feeding of the five thousand, all Palestine with the courses of Christ's journeys, Asia Minor and Macedonia with the route of Paul on his second great missionary journey. Much of this the children themselves will help you prepare, and will learn a great deal by so doing. Indeed, the wise teacher will do as little as possible herself even in getting ready to teach, and will make her scholars themselves her assistant teachers.

That is one of the beauties of such kindergarten devices as pricking paper and weaving bright yarn back and forth to fill up the picture outlined by the holes. It is the scholars' work, and not your own, and they do not forget their own work. Simple designs illustrating the lessons can thus be pricked into the children's memories at the point of a pin.

It is best not to confuse the class with a multiplicity of objects, but to fix on a single symbol for each lesson, that will stand distinctly for the lesson in the weekly and quarterly reviews. The kind of object should constantly vary. If this week it is cut out of pasteboard, next week let it be modeled in clay, and the following week let it be a picture in black and white. The simpler, the better: a cup for the lesson at Sychar; a dried leaf for the parable of

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the fig-tree ; a square of white cloth for Peter's vision on the housetop. Do not produce the object till you want it in your teaching, or the children's interest will be dissipated before you have need of it. Get a little cabinet in which to store all your teaching apparatus. Do not keep the object in sight after you are through with it, or you will lose attention from your next point. Remember, in all object-teaching, how inferior is any symbol to the truth symbolized,—its shadow only, a mere hint of it,—and learn to drop the interest-exciting object and use the interest for the truth you want to teach.

In this branch of your work a knowledge of common science will prove invaluable. Botany and geology, chemistry, zoölogy, and astronomy open one's eyes to the beauties and marvels of God's handiwork, and disclose analogies abounding and true. There is much also to learn from the books of models,—models for suggestion, of course, and not for slavish imitation,—such as Tyndall's "Object-lessons for Children," Roads' "Little Children in the Church of Christ," and Stall's "Five-minute Object-sermons to Children," or his "Talks to the King's Children."

The most valuable "objects" are the children themselves, when you can carry out an illustration with their own active bodies. For instance, in teaching the lesson on the first council at Jerusalem, arrange the chairs in two groups, distant as far as possible from each other. One is Antioch, the other is Jerusalem. Two picked scholars, Paul and Barnabas, set

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out from the Antioch corner toward Jerusalem corner. Some of their comrades accompany them part way. The scholars at the other side of the room receive them with interest. Paul and Barnabas—or the teacher for them—tell their story. A Pharisee rises, and the teacher puts words in his mouth. Peter rises and tells about Cornelius. James, the most dignified boy present, gives his decision. Judas and Silas are selected to escort Paul and Barnabas back again, bearing a letter.

The visit of the Queen of Sheba, the taking of Joseph to Egypt, Paul's vision in Troas and passage to Macedonia, the parallel history of the northern and southern kingdoms,—indeed, countless events,—may be illustrated in this way. The only danger is that the whole may seem too much like play; but this danger is easily avoided by an earnest teacher, and the gains in interest and remembrance will prove rich justification.

An illustration still simpler, and very effective, may be obtained from the children merely by the motion of their hands. "Went *down* from Jerusalem to Jericho"—all hands raised high and rapidly lowered. "And *great* was the fall thereof"—the same movement. "The Queen of Sheba wondered"—hands raised in astonishment. "A sower went out to sow"—hands sweep to the right and left. These concert movements not merely fix the attention of the class, but serve as outlet to their restlessness. Some teachers advise a halt midway in the lesson for the intro-

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duction of some light gymnastics to rest the class. That is well; but if the same result can be gained in immediate connection with the lesson, so much the better.

After all has been said, however, the primary teacher's great art is the art of story-telling. Learn to start right in. Preliminary preachment will spoil it all. Use short and simple words. Keep clear and distinct the order of events, and do not confuse the children by going back to take up omitted points. Nevertheless,—and this is not a contradiction,—repeat and repeat and repeat, telling each section of the story over and over, in different ways and with ever-fresh particulars, till the children's slippery memories have laid hold upon it.

Introduce a myriad natural details, for which you must draw on a consecrated imagination. You should hear Mr. Moody tell a Bible story! It is not enough to say that Abraham determined to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice. The great, loving soul of the evangelist has brooded too long over the Bible for a statement so cold as that. He must tell about the patriarch's sleepless nights; about his getting up and going over to the bed of the boy so peacefully sleeping; about his weeping when no one was watching him; how he couldn't eat his breakfast; how his heart beat whenever he looked at the lad. And long before Mr. Moody is through, the great sacrifice is so vivid to him and to us that we all weep together, and no moralizing is needed.

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You are not Moodys? No; but hundreds of primary teachers are doing just this work, telling to their children the Bible stories as they must have happened, reading with the heart and telling them to the life. Long meditation is needed, persistent "putting yourself in his place," and it is even well to write out the story in full before you attempt to tell it. When you receive the reward, you will count the trouble as nothing.

Music is a great aid in the primary room. If you cannot afford a piano, learn how cheap are the "baby organs," and how effectively they will lead the children's singing. Even though you work in an extemporized class-room, shut off by screens or a curtain from the rest of the school, you can at least use "whisper songs." Yes, and these whisper songs may often be motion songs, and serve to illustrate the lesson.

At least one song of the hour should bear directly on the central thought of the hour, and before it is sung you should explain why you call for it. Most of the best songs for this purpose will prove to be standard hymns, and there is every reason why the simplest of these should be taught to the children, that they may find as many points of contact as possible with the services of the older church. The aid of the parents may well be invoked to teach these hymns at home to the children,—a helpful task, for more than the children's sake, at which to set the parents.

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The primary song-books contain bright little hymns appropriate to introduce prayer, to open and close the school, to be sung before Bible-reading and while the collection is taken. A clear-voiced assistant, sitting and singing among the children, will train them insensibly, and draw their childish voices into harmony with her own. Just as the children will enjoy a class name, motto, colors, so they will be delighted to select a class song; and this device may be tried, together with many others mentioned in the chapter on "A Singing Sunday-school."

Our foundation work will surely fall if it is not itself founded firmly on the Bible. Be sure that each scholar has his own Bible—*and a large-type copy*. Why is it that the smaller the child, the tinier the type? It is not so with the children's other books. How can we expect them to take any interest in pages that look so black and uninteresting, and that, moreover, would ruin their eyes for life if they did read them?

The Bible must not be so expensive that it cannot be marked freely. The children will learn much by this exercise. A little set of colored pencils may be given to each child, for class use only. The golden texts and other verses, and the places where the lesson story may be read, should all be marked with pencils of appropriate symbolic color. The children can easily find the place, and the folks at home will know just what passages to read to the children and to help them learn.

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Make much of memory verses. We are filling the little heads nowadays far more with sand-map puppets and blackboard rebuses than with the Word of God. Drill often and thoroughly on these verses. Prepare a Bible roll by fastening a long strip of manilla paper on a spring window-shade roller. Let the lower line contain a few initial letters hinting at the memory verse concealed just above it. After recitation, pull this down for the scholars to compare; and so proceed through the roll. An alphabet of Bible verses may thus be learned, or an alphabet of Bible men and women.

One point needs especial emphasis. No matter how thoroughly you have told the story, or how fascinated the children have been held by your recital, never consider the hour well spent till you have read from the Bible itself the story you have been telling. The more delightful and satisfactory your own account has been, the more necessary is it to show the children that within the covers of the Book are to be found all these beautiful stories.

Part of your foundation work is certainly to teach the children to pray. There are many appropriate prayer poems, such as, for the beginning of the lesson:

“ A prayer we lift to thee, dear Lord,
Ere we shall listen to thy word.
The truth thy Spirit brings from thee
Help us to study patiently.
For Jesus' sake. Amen.”

Or this, for the close of the lesson:

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“ Our Father, through each coming day
Watch o'er our every step, we pray;
And may thy Spirit hide the word
Deep in our willing hearts, O Lord.
For Jesus' sake. Amen.”

These the class may be taught to repeat in concert, with bowed heads.

One of the best methods is this. Let the teacher offer a simple prayer, sentence by sentence or clause by clause, the children reverently repeating it after her, all heads being bowed. Best of all, of course, are the Bible prayers, the prayer psalms, and the many noble prayer verses scattered here and there. Store the children's memories with these, and in coming years there will be no stammering or hesitancy when, in public or in private, they talk with their Father in heaven.

One of the primary teacher's chief allies is a happy temper. If you have it not, get it. An ounce of sunshine is better than an iron mountain of scolding. The voice alone may make or mar the lesson. Is it good-cheery, or goody-goody? How joyous Christ must have been! How his little children love fun! And how much easier it will be for you to get them to love him if you also love fun!

Indeed, we cannot know too thoroughly the child nature. The scientists' study of it is in its infancy, but a sympathetic heart will carry you farther in ten minutes than all their psychology in a lifetime. As you teach, have in mind, not *your* trials, joys, and

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hopes, but *theirs*. Don't talk about "ambition," but about "getting more praise than another girl"; or about "covetousness," but about "wishing you, and not Tom, had his new bicycle." Don't allegorize; that is a grown-up delight. Don't talk about "the hill Difficulty," "the bog of Despond." Do you tell me the children enjoy "The Pilgrim's Progress"? Yes; but not as allegory. Vanity Fair is a real town to them, and Mr. Pliable a real man. Avoid what I call "fanciful" teaching, and the rather build your lessons upon actual men and women, so that the children may come to *know* Eli and Gideon, Ruth and Martha, as vividly as they know the men and women around them. That is better than to know Lily Lazy and Matt Mischievous and the Sea of Sorrow.

Review often. When you have reached the point where you think the children cannot possibly forget, then—review again! Frequently say, "Now, after I have finished telling about the lesson, I am going to ask Fred to tell me about it; and after Fred is through, I shall ask *some one else* to tell the same story." Often ask questions that can be answered in concert, and insist that all shall join in the reply. This will usually lead to a repetition that will prove helpful. In such concert work, if you do not watch, the more forward will be the only ones that will respond, and you will be obliged to draw out the timid and repress the pert by many a special question addressed to the former.

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Sometimes it is hard to keep order ; always hard, if the teacher has not by nature or attainment the face and voice and bearing that command order because they lovingly and firmly expect it. The teacher should be in the room before any scholar arrives. Much disorder has its source in those irresponsible ten minutes before the school opens. Then, while she is teaching, an assistant should sit with the children, ready to check their mischievousness, attend quickly to their needs and desires, care for the late comers, help them "find the place" in Bibles and song-books, and perform many other little offices. Some heads of large primary departments establish "hospitals," where are sent the children with "sick" hands or feet or tongues,—a special class where the most uncontrollable are "treated" till they are reported "cured." In general, however, if the children are interested, they will be orderly ; and if the teacher is interested, so are likely to be the scholars. Put into the work your whole soul, and you are reasonably sure of getting the whole minds of the children.

Love them! I cannot better sum up the entire matter than in those two words. Love them, and they will love you and gladly obey you. Love them, and you will work hard for them, and will not mind the hardness. Love them, and your love will teach you how to teach them wisely. And the God of love, who loves little children, will give you, week by week, the fullness of his joy.

Chapter XXXII

The Trial Balance

SOME teachers omit the review, or pass over it in a perfunctory way. This is as if a merchant should never balance his books, or, taking a trial balance, should be heedless of the result. If we are to prosper in this our Father's business, we must be careful as any merchant to discover just where we stand with our scholars; we must test their progress often and thoroughly, and never rest satisfied or let them rest satisfied until they and we are assured that the balance is comfortably on the right side of the ledger.

One reason for the common shrinking from review day is because we have not manfully met it at the very beginning of the quarter. It is the preview that gives success to the review. When the teacher looks carefully through the twelve lessons ahead of him, grasps the underlying thread that binds them together, and forms his plan for a review at the outset, review day has lost all its terrors. Then every lesson becomes part of a consistent series. Then the weekly

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reviews, which alone make possible a successful quarterly review, lay each a course of a steadily rising edifice.

No clearness of knowledge may be expected unless the teacher knows clearly at the start just what it is that he expects the scholars to know; and the building grows with double certainty if the little workmen themselves are given glimpses of the architect's plans,—at least of a “front elevation.” “For these three months,” the teacher may say, “we are to study Christ's life as Mark records it. My plan is for you to vote each Sunday on the most important facts we have studied,—either in the lesson text or in the ‘intervening events.’ Sometimes it will be one fact; it will never be more than three. All together there are thirty facts we shall learn, and they will make an outline history of Christ's entire life.”

How such a scheme, clearly and often stated, will clarify and systematize the quarter's work! Three or four times during the three months the teacher will propound brisk questions covering the points of all the previous lessons of the quarter, following this by a written test. Let him prepare for each lesson a card, on which he prints questions answerable by the facts to be learned. Fastening twelve hooks on a board, he hangs these cards on the hooks week by week, and uses them in these reviews and in the final review of the quarter. If the class is one of little tots, a symbol for each lesson, cut out of pasteboard or consisting of some object, may be hung up in place

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of the card,—such a symbol as a needle stuck in a piece of cloth, answering to the story of Dorcas.

Some such preparation will make thoroughly successful a written examination on review day. The questions should be simple and clear, and such as can be answered fully in a very few words. They should take up only the points on which emphasis has been laid throughout the quarter. If the teacher presents the plan in a jolly way, the class will enter into it heartily, as good fun.

For a change, now and then invite the scholars to bring in, on review day, lists of what each considers the ten principal events of the quarter. A comparison is to be made, and the events that receive the most votes will constitute a model list. This exercise in itself will make a pretty good review.

An excellent review may be based upon the six natural divisions of all lessons,—times, persons, places, events, sayings, teachings. The “sayings” are the short sentences best worth memorizing. A review “quiz” may take up these six points one after the other, carrying each over the entire range of lessons, sometimes chronologically, but more often at haphazard.

A more elaborate plan is to assign each of these categories to some scholar the week before, telling him, for instance, that you will depend upon him alone to fix the location of all the events in the twelve lessons. Carrying out the comparison indicated in the title to this chapter, you may do very thorough

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work by getting each scholar to keep a Sunday-school ledger. He will open up a page to the account of "persons," another to the account of "events," and so on, and will make weekly entries on each page. The quarterly review will then be indeed his trial balance.

I am very fond of a map review. Using a large outline map, sometimes one drawn before the class on the blackboard by a scholar who has practised the feat, I call for the first event of the quarter's lessons, and one of the class places a figure 1 at the scene of the event; thus with all the events in order. Then, reviewing again, I ask, pointing to the map, "What was event No. 7, here at Sychar?" or, "Four events at Jerusalem—what were they, in order?"

Another good way to use the map—a map, this time, drawn in outline on a large sheet of manilla paper—is to employ "stickers," bright bits of gummed paper, cut to various shapes. Blue stars, for instance, stuck here and there over the map, will indicate the points where Abraham is found in a series of lessons. They may be numbered, or not. Gold stars may show where Christ worked the miracles studied during the quarter. All the events in one year of Christ's ministry may be represented by green stars, in another year by scarlet stars, or purple stars. The method branches out into many fascinating applications.

Some teachers make large use of the golden texts. If these have been emphasized, they may wisely be introduced in the review. Write each upon a card.

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If you have artistic talent, you may make each card a thing of beauty, to be kept as a souvenir by the scholar. These cards will be distributed at random, and each scholar will be expected to answer the questions, first of the class and then of the teacher, on the lesson whose golden text he holds. I would not urge the recalling of lessons by titles, for the titles are not constituent parts of the lesson; but the golden text usually goes to the heart of the matter. Neither would I favor such a plan as the one last mentioned, that assigns one lesson to each scholar, unless the entire class is drawn into active participation by such a questioning from the scholars as I have indicated.

A pleasant and profitable review for some classes is based on the quotable passages in the quarter's Scripture. These memorable sentences are written on cards, which are distributed evenly. Every scholar is expected to tell when, where, and by whom his quotation was first spoken, and at the close of the exercise each scholar will be called upon to repeat all his quotations from memory. Then the teacher will gather the cards, mix them up, present the pile now to this scholar and now to that, and ask him to give the facts about whatever quotation he may draw. The success of this method of review, as of all others, will largely depend upon its previous announcement, the scholars having gone over the quarter's lessons at home with this coming test in mind.

The review may sometimes take the form of a contest; you may call it a "question tournament."

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Appoint leaders, and let them choose sides. Each side in turn has the privilege of asking a question of the other side. The question must be passed upon as fair by the teacher. The scholars on each side take turns in answering, and when the scholar whose turn it is cannot answer, his entire company has a chance. If no one on that side knows the answer, the other side gives the correct reply, and thereby scores one point. The side with the highest score wins the tournament.

Methods less brisk than this employ pen and ink. You may ask the scholars to bring to the class tabular outlines of the quarter's history. A little book, connected with the quarter's study in some way, may be offered as a reward for the best outline, if the teacher thinks it wise; some teachers would not. At another time ask each scholar to write a five-minute essay on some topic that will require study of all the lessons, the topics all being different. These essays are to be read before the class, and their themes should be as bright as the teacher and her shrewdest friends can make them. A variation of this plan is to propound to the class a series of questions, all requiring search through the twelve lessons, and allow each scholar to choose a question upon which he will *spea*k for two, three, or four minutes before the class on review day.

Whatever your review gives or fails to give, be sure it leaves with your class a clear-cut outline or summary of the three months' study. Omit the con-

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sideration of lessons not closely connected with the story, like some of the temperance, Easter, and Christmas lessons. Center upon some graphical scheme whenever possible, if it is only a vertical line divided into decades along which events may be strung, or a circle so divided as to represent Moses' life or Christ's. If you can, group the lessons around some great personality prominent in them. Never fail to bind them together with the golden thread of their relation to Christ. Trace through them the progress of some thought or event, such as God's leadings that developed the Israelites, the growth of the Christian church, the unfolding of Christ's life, or David's, or Joseph's. Discover what unity the lessons have, and bring it out in the review.

If these matters have been discussed in the quarter's lessons, set them in fresh lights. It must be a new view as well as a review.

If you have succeeded well with one form of review, thank God, and—change the form next time. The methods suggested in this chapter are not equally valuable in all reviews. Make out a programme in January for the four reviews ahead of you, and plan them all differently.

And finally, review your reviews. Review them on the review day, going over the same ground at least twice, in varying mode; and in your weekly reviews thereafter take occasion now and then to revert to the work of the preceding quarter. A matter is not learned to-day unless it is learned for all days.

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If the review discloses weak spots, strengthen them. If it discloses excellences, praise them. With steady and honest purpose, take on review day the trial balance of your work, and may God grant you a balance on the heavenward side of the ledger!

Chapter XXXIII

At the Helm

THE superintendent of a Sunday-school is not the steam of the boat, for all true power comes from the Holy Spirit. He does not even tend the fires; that work the teachers must do. Neither does he make the chart by which the boat is steered; that is the work of the International Lesson Committee. No; the superintendent stands at the helm. He takes orders from the one Captain, and transmits them. Now he turns a wheel, now he pulls a bell-rope, now he shouts through a speaking-tube. In spite of the multiplied details, his work is simple. He has to know his ship, the waters, and the weather: that is, he has to know God, what he wants him to do; and his scholars, what they are capable of doing; and his teachers, what they are capable of getting the scholars to do. Knowing these three things, he will not fret himself with attempting impossibilities, tasks beyond the power of teachers and scholars and so aside from God's will for them, but he will know he

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has succeeded if his teachers work as hard as they can in getting their scholars to work as hard as *they* can to learn and do God's will.

The superintendent's work begins with himself, then goes on to his officers, then to his teachers, then to his scholars, then to other schools.

First, looking to himself, he must gain what some one lays down as the four essentials of success in Christian work: "consecration, concentration, tact, and contact." That is, his whole soul must be in his work; he must say, with Paul, "This *one* thing I do"; he must come in touch with his forces, and he must know how to handle them after he touches them.

There are some men that should never be superintendents. One of these is Mr. Long, who has to say everything in four different ways, each way being Broadway. Another is Mr. Twitchall, who jerks out his words between the jerks of his nervous body, who darts here and there like the snapper of a whip, and infects the entire school with the contagion of his restlessness. Mr. Black is another, that man of gloomy face and sepulchral voice. Mr. Daggart is another, for his tongue is dipped in the venom of sarcasm and knows only to scold.

My favorite superintendent is Mr. Short, the son of Mr. Bright. He has all his father's good cheer. His face is full of a sunshine that doesn't need to be put into words. He is cordial even more plainly than he is spiritual, but because he is spiritual. He is businesslike. He is modest. He remembers that

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he is only one, and the school two hundred, and he divides time on about that basis. He knows—oh, he knows the value of five minutes!

He has the grit of a bulldog, this Superintendent Short, son of Mr. Bright. When he is sure he has hold of a good thing, he does not dream of letting go, any more than those well-persuaded jaws. And he has the bulldog's independence and thick skin, but with more than bulldog reason; for is he not responsible to God alone? If God says, "Good!" what matters the sneer of a man? So he does the best he knows how, and keeps serene.

With all his independence he is modest and teachable, is Superintendent Short, son of Mr. Bright. He visits other Sunday-schools, and gets hints there. He visits the public schools, and gets many valuable hints from their superintendents. He reads everything that has Sunday-school methods in it, and from all this he gets hints. He goes around asking everybody, "How can I do better work? How can the school be improved?" and he receives into a teachable mind the hints he gets. When he has to find fault, he first praises what he can. Indeed, praise—for a wonder!—is his favorite form of criticism, and a stimulating form it is.

Withal, Superintendent Short is enterprising. He sets apart from his busy week regular times for his Sunday-school work, and makes a business of it. He is ready to spend money as well as time. He keeps a notebook crowded with new ideas, and carries them

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out one after the other in the order of their importance, as systematically as a great general conducts a campaign. He does not foolishly despise what is old and tested, but he knows how to freshen up old principles by new applications. He is broad-minded, too, with no "fads" or favoritisms, keeping equal interest in all departments of school work. And he does not stop with the mechanics of the Sunday-school. All his enterprise sets before it the one great goal of soul-saving.

Thus far the superintendent by himself; now a word about his relation to his officers. Just as the failure of a school on the spiritual side is quite often due to lack of a good teachers' meeting, so a failure on the administrative side is probably due to the lack of a "cabinet meeting," where the superintendent consults with all his officers and committees, and where each gets inspiration and counsel from the other. The teachers' meeting should be occupied with entirely different matters. It cannot take the place of a gathering of the executive, and ought to come on a different night.

This cabinet meeting must be set for a regular time, and nothing short of an earthquake must be allowed to break it up. Every officer should make a report to the cabinet, and the report should be in writing. The latter requirement saves time, adds dignity, and provides the meeting with definite statements as a basis for discussion.

A wise superintendent will utilize all his officers to

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the utmost. He will make the assistant superintendent assist. The theory is that the assistant shall be able, in the superintendent's absence, to do everything the superintendent would do. How can he learn, except by doing everything, now and then, when the superintendent is present? Many a superintendent has worn himself out doing five men's work rather than train four men to help him. Elijah trained Elisha to be prophet in his stead. If he had not done so, I hardly think Elijah would have been carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. Every worker should prepare his successor, should make himself unnecessary.

Let it be the superintendent's ambition, then, to create an automatic Sunday-school, one he can leave to run itself. He must keep himself in the background. He must test the matter by occasional absences, on foray for ideas in other schools. He must do as little as possible himself,—no danger but it will be enough!—and he must get as much as possible done by others. So he will create, not a machine, but an organism.

In the third place,—the superintendent and the teachers. He must individualize them. As Garfield, the young school-teacher, was wont to lie awake nights, tracing out on his sheet in the dark a plan of the schoolroom, locating each scholar's desk and planning for that scholar's growth as he did so, thus the superintendent should consider separately and regularly each teacher's task and abilities, trials and successes.

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It is his joyous work to encourage them, to note improvement in their scholars, to repeat to them the kind words of parents, to give them a cheer in their arduous and difficult and, for the time, thankless tasks. When a superintendent has praised discreetly, half his work is done.

Of course, the superintendent will study his lesson as thoroughly as any teacher; and this is not by any means an unnecessary remark, though some may think so. Indeed, there are even many occasions when he may teach a class, though usually he is best left free during the lesson hour to greet the strangers, or, watching from some central post like a general in battle, to fly to the rescue of some teacher whose class may be getting mischievous, restless, or careless.

For the superintendent should feel at perfect liberty to sit quietly down with any class in his school, and should do this so often and easily that his coming ceases to be a disturbance to teacher or scholars. If the superintendent is not welcome, it will be because he does not know how to help unobtrusively, and he would better stay away.

The best relations are not possible unless the superintendent visits the teachers in their homes, and gets them to come to his for frequent private consultations or for an occasional social hour all together. The teachers' meeting for the study of the lesson will not take the place of these heart-to-heart talks, in which sympathy and appreciation, friendly counsel

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and united prayers, draw the teachers very close to their leader.

In the fourth place, the superintendent must know his scholars. If he has time to visit them, each visit will count; but that is in most cases too much to expect. Sunday-school socials and picnics will give him a chance to push a little further the knowledge of them that he will gain by his visits to their classes; but, after all, his best chance is in the passing salutation on the street. Often speak of the matter before the school, asking the scholars to greet you when they meet you; and then hail every urchin you run across as if he were your very own! If you make it a habit to tarry for ten minutes after the Sunday-school hour (tired?—never mind!), both teachers and scholars will besiege you then,—*provided* you have made yourself worth besieging! That you are to be in every way the children's hero goes without saying,—the glorious big boy to whom all the boys look up proudly, the chivalrous knight whose colors all the girls are glad to wear,—it goes without saying, that is, if you deserve to be superintendent at all!

Fifthly and finally, the superintendent and other schools. He has been getting from them all he can, if he is enterprising; he should give to them all he can. The large cities have their superintendents' unions, composed of those that hold now, or have held, this post of honor and responsibility,—and few associations are as delightful. Nearly everywhere, Sunday-school conventions are available; and to

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these, as gathering up in his own experience whatever his school has learned and accomplished, the superintendent should carry his freshest inspiration and his wisest plans. No superintendent can live—can be a *live* superintendent—to himself.

One thing should be said, to close this hasty sketch. If the superintendent is all this, or even part of all this, in his personal motives, and in his relations to officers, teachers, scholars, and other schools, he will always be a paid superintendent. He may have no salary; on the contrary, he may be decidedly out of pocket; but the rewards of his labor will be so abundant, so joyful, that not all the silver and gold in all the mines of earth could measure them.

Chapter XXXIV

The Superintendent's Chance

At the opening of the school the superintendent hasn't half a chance; at the close he has a large chance—as large, in fact, as he is. At the opening the superintendent is merely a master of ceremonies to usher in the work as buoyantly as possible; at the close he is a teacher, the high priest of all the teachers. His work of introduction is important, but far more important is his work of peroration. The last five minutes furnish his chance to gather all the teachings of the hour into one point and press it home.

1. It is *his* chance. Now or never let him be original. Let him study his talents; some can work best with chalk, some with anecdotes, some with questions, some with exegesis, some with exhortation. Let him get up a specialty for those five minutes and burnish it till it shines. Whatever method he chooses should be filled with his personality and serve to impress his personality upon the school. It is life that tells on life, and the more of himself the superinten-

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dent puts into these five minutes the more will this, his chance, prove his success.

2. It is his chance to gather *all* the teachings of the hour. Not that he will try to "cover the ground" of the entire lesson. In that case his chance would turn out his mischance. He will not try, either, to give something for each class of scholars, for *all* that he gives must be for *all* classes. Among all the thoughts of all the departments, primary, intermediate, and senior, there is a single golden thought like a golden thread. These strands he must seize and weave them, in his five minutes, into a golden cord.

3. It is his chance to gather all the teachings of the hour into *one* point. Probably every teacher in the school has been trying to teach too much. The lesson was intended for a wedge, but they have been using the blunt end. Turn it around. Illustrate the matchless might of simplicity. Do not think that, because the lesson was on the envy of Joseph's brethren, the theme of envy has become hackneyed, and you must talk about Jacob and Reuben and the Midianites and God's overruling providence. If the teachers have worked well, the scholars will be eager for further words on envy; if they have worked poorly, all the more need of a forcible presentation of the main theme.

4. It is his chance to gather all the teachings of the hour into one point *and press it home*. His will be a lively school in proportion as it influences life. When the moral truths of our lessons are fixed in the

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life, the facts connected with them will be fixed in the mind. Let the superintendent ask himself, for as many scholars of varied age and character as he can, "How might this lesson change *his* life, *her* life, for the coming week—forever?" Put the "snapper" on the hour. Let it be seen that you expect definite results in spirit and conduct.

Some urge that the superintendent should be mute at the close of the lesson hour, lest his words destroy the effect of the teachers' exhortations. To be sure, he may emphasize what they have not emphasized, though even this danger is very slight if the superintendent is careful to seize on the lesson's central thought; but if the impression made by the teacher is endangered by a few earnest words from the superintendent, what *will* be left of it by the close of the conversation around the dinner-table?

A closing word regarding the superintendent's questions. In no better way than by questions can he win and hold the school's attention. Those given in the various lesson helps are intended to be simply suggestive of possible matter and manner. Five things are essential: (1) that the questions be simple enough to be understood by the youngest; (2) that they lead up to a point valuable enough to interest the oldest; (3) that they can be answered by a few words, preferably by one; (4) that they be presented in a brisk and businesslike way; (5) that prompt answers from all parts of the school together be insisted on, the answer being called for again and again till

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all have connected themselves with it. Half a dozen such questions should lead up skilfully to the main lesson of the hour, which should receive brief but pointed application by anecdote, blackboard, or exhortation.

All this is a high ideal. "To attain it will require," you say, "much more than five minutes." You are right, Brother Superintendent: five minutes before the school, but *one hour* or even *two hours* of prayerful preparation at home. However, it is your chance. Do not ignobly lose it.

Chapter XXXV

The Sunday-School and the Weather

A RAINY day is the best test of a Sunday-school, and its best opportunity.

For the scholars it is a sieve, separating the zealous workers from the careless ones.

For the general school it is an index, since if Christ is not "in the midst" of the few on rainy days, surely the many on sunny days are not wont to gather "in his name."

For the teacher it is a revealing question: "Do you teach for the excitement and praise of crowded benches, or is a single soul, with its issues of life and death, inspiration enough?"

It is the superintendent's chance, because then he learns his staff, the pick, the enthusiastic nucleus, of his school. It is a good day for "setting balls to rolling."

It is the scholar's chance,—his chance to show appreciation of the school by attendance; his chance for help on questions that try his soul.

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It is the teacher's chance. He will never draw close to his scholars if not now; never see their nobility or their faults if not through the troubled lens of a rainy day.

It is the opportunity of the general school. Prayer-meeting workers often observe that the meetings held on stormy evenings are always the best, because every attendant feels it his duty to take active part. For the same reason a rainy day brings out the mettle of a Sunday-school. The bashful are impelled to greater boldness, the careless to stricter attention. Responsibilities are thrown upon unwonted shoulders. Many a Sunday-school worker has been developed by rainy days.

Teachers must do their scolding for poor attendance, if ever, on the days of crowded seats, because then only are the truants present. Have nothing but words of good cheer for the few who come on stormy days.

We are often told about preachers who, as a reward and an incentive, wisely preach their best (if they can) on rainy days, to the faithful few. For such days the teacher also must make his highest preparation, because then his work will produce best results; because then he will need to bring most inspiration with him, as he gets none from well-filled seats; because his scholars then not only deserve his best, but, lacking the zest of numbers, need his best to hold their attention; because they will appreciate better what they have come through difficulties to get.

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On rainy days there are many late comers, and therefore many fine chances for practical Christianity. Greet them cheerfully, if you must stop your finest exhortation to do it. Such a close will be its most eloquent period.

If you investigate tactfully the absences of rainy days, you will often come upon a truer knowledge of the home life and needs of your scholars than any sunshiny observations could give you.

On rainy days, if ever, scholars should be sure of finding their own teacher; yet, as human nature is, on rainy days there is always necessary some fusion of classes. The teachers of joined classes may do much good or infinite harm. Criticism, expressed or implied, of the plans or precepts of the other teacher, is a poison which has few antidotes. If he has been teaching false doctrine, he, not his scholars, is to be told that fact. And, on the contrary, a word of wise praise for whatever of solid acquirement you may see in his scholars, as it comes from an outsider, will discover marvelously their teacher to them, and their possibilities to themselves.

As we need to emphasize the advantages of bad weather, so we need to remember the dangers of fine weather. Now, the teacher must be mindful not to lose the individuals in the crowd, or his teaching sense in the temptation to harangue. Now, the superintendent must remember that his unifying and organizing skill is especially needed. If rainy days are best for study and personal work, fair days, and,

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above all, hot days, are best for singing and concert drill in reading and questioning.

As our days, so shall our strength be, if we are Christ's, dear Sunday-school workers; but different kinds of days need different kinds of strength.

Chapter XXXVI

A Profitable Picnic

A LARGE number of Sunday-schools are in the habit of holding a picnic every summer. In spite of the countless jests at the expense of the Sunday-school picnic, the custom is in every way commendable. Where can teacher and scholars, superintendent and teachers, better come into that familiar, every-day contact that tells so much of character and for character, than out under the open sky and in the merry meadows? And yet why is it that the very word "picnic" makes most Sunday-school teachers groan, and presents to the superintendent's mind a picture no more delectable than of hot, dusty cars, pushing, quarreling children, red-faced teachers, and lunches seized on by ants?

Of course, in moving so large a body of people, especially of youngsters, many untoward events are to be expected; but nevertheless, when the picnic is not a conspicuous success, there is usually one reason: it was not well planned for. So many managers of

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picnics are nothing but transportation managers! Getting a reduction of railroad fare, packing and unpacking the lunches, filing the children in and out of the cars,—such details sum up their plans. As for entertainment on the picnic grounds,—why, turn the children loose, and they will take care of that part of it!

On the contrary, he is a wise man that can entertain himself well and profitably for a day without aid from outside. The feat is impossible for most children. How well I remember my own childish miseries on holidays because I couldn't think of anything I wanted to do! On the haphazard plan your picnic will go uproariously for a time, but it will soon "fray out" into a tangle of ennui and quarrels.

In this brief chapter, then, I want to suggest merely one out of many schemes for a profitable picnic. It will include in the day's plans all ages and classes, and afford pleasure for mind and spirit as well as body.

In the first place, arrange with great care a programme of contests. If it is a joint picnic, some of the contests will be between representatives of the Sunday-schools that take part; otherwise, between classes and individuals of the one Sunday-school. Bring in the girls as well as the boys, and the men and women as well as the children. Running, sack-races, three-legged races, pole and rope climbing, boat-races, croquet and tennis matches, base-ball (a game among the old men will cause much amuse-

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ment), the marching of competing companies, broom or flag drills for the girls, leaping, slow races on the bicycle, throwing the hammer, soap-bubble contests—why, the number of these sports is legion.

Just a few hints:—

Give no prizes, but “honorable mention.”

Let the contests be well planned and advertised beforehand, and set the scholars to training for them.

Give every one a printed programme (which may be worked off on a manifold), and so arrange it that the entire company, if possible, may be spectators of each contest.

Make everything as short and snappy as you can.

Throughout the programme, work in all classes and ages as best you may. Don't, for instance, put all the contests in which the little ones engage in the same part of the day.

In the second place, arrange a literary and religious programme that shall give a spiritual application to all these physical contests. Organize a Sunday-school choir, which, after careful previous practice, will sing some of the many songs that treat the Christian life as a race, or a wrestling, or a battle. Some of the Bible passages of similar tenor should be recited. Poems may be repeated bearing the same lesson. And the brightest of the scholars and teachers, of course not omitting your pastor, will give some very brief little essays or talks along this same line. This part of the day's programme may fitly be placed just after lunch, when in the heat of the day the athletes

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will wish to rest, and when all will be ready to sit down and listen.

Much will depend on the master of ceremonies for the day. Let him be the jolliest man you can find, but withal a man of deep consecration, who can make all feel that, whether they eat or drink, or play games, or whatever they do, they must do all for the glory of God. In this spirit alone can you hope to have a profitable picnic.

Chapter XXXVII

A Singing Sunday-School

LIFELESS singing means, usually, a dead Sunday-school. Many a superintendent might greatly increase the vigor of his school by getting a little snap into the music. Different ways of singing will not of themselves solve the problem, but they will go far toward it. Here are a few methods which will add to the singing the variety that is the spice of it as well as of nearly everything else.

Try reading the song in concert before it is sung. It would puzzle most even of us older folks to tell, after we have sung a hymn, what is in it. Concert reading brings out unsuspected beauties of thought, and the hymn will be sung afterward with fresh zest and with fuller intelligence. The superintendent may vary this plan by reading the stanzas alternately with the school, or the girls may alternate with the boys. Occasionally get a single scholar to read the hymn before the school, or, what is far better, to commit it to memory and recite it.

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Indeed, memory hymns, to be committed to memory by the entire school, and sung without the book, will prove very popular. Select songs that are worth learning for their words as well as for their music,—a thing which, alas! cannot be said of all our Sunday-school songs. One memory hymn a month might possibly be achieved, and your children will rapidly grow independent of hymn-books, as their grandsires were.

They may like to vote upon a school hymn for the entire year, and learn it in this way,—one that shall serve as a sort of rallying song throughout the twelve-month. The various classes, too, may be encouraged to select their own class songs, and to practise them at their class socials. Then, once in a while, the entire school may listen while one or two classes sing their class hymns.

It would do no harm, either, for the superintendent occasionally to bind the children's interest to the singing by asking them to call for their favorites, that the school may sing them. This privilege may be granted to the classes or scholars that have the best record in attendance.

It will add interest to the singing if bits of pleasant information are sometimes given about the authors of our familiar songs. At the opening of the session, for instance, tell something about the blind hymn-writer, Fanny Crosby, and then let all the songs sung that day be by her; or tell a little about Miss Haver-gal's beautiful life, or give a few bright anecdotes

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about Dr. S. F. Smith, and then use nothing but their hymns. Some such book as Hezekiah Butterworth's "Story of the Hymns" (New York: The American Tract Society. \$1.75), or Duffield's "English Hymns: Their Authors and History" (New York: The Funk & Wagnalls Co. \$3), will afford a plentiful supply of biographical material. Once in a while get one of the scholars to read one of these hymn anecdotes, or to tell it in his own words.

Prayer songs—there are many most beautiful ones—may be used as prayers, all heads being bowed while they are sung softly; or they may be read in the same way.

Antiphonal songs are easily arranged. Choose two classes of good singers in distant parts of the room, and let one sing the verses and the other the chorus of some suitable song. A hymn arranged in the form of question and answer, such as "Watchman, tell us of the night," or "Art thou weary, art thou languid?" is very effective when sung in this way, or when read in dialogue, the superintendent taking the questions and the school the answers.

Other dispositions may be made, for the sake of variety. Get the girls to sing the stanzas, and the boys the choruses, or the girls to sing one verse, and the boys the next, all uniting on the choruses; or, let the school to the right of the center alternate in singing with the school to the left. Send a company of singers into another room, with closed doors, and have them sing the chorus as an echo, very softly.

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Get the teachers to sing the stanzas of some song, while the whole school sings the refrain.

Solos are good once in a while, especially if you make the school the chorus for them. A quartette of picked singers may be introduced very delightfully on occasion, especially if their selection is germane to the lesson topic, and, best of all, if the quartette is chosen from the scholars themselves. The primary department will hugely enjoy singing one of their songs to the main school, and the older scholars will enjoy it quite as heartily.

Possibly a Sunday-school choir might be organized to advantage, the strong singers from among the more mature scholars being banded together to practice new music and lead the singing. School orchestras have been very useful in many churches, the boys being proud to serve the school with violin and cornet.

Most useful, however, in adding zest to the singing, are the simple changes and variations that shrewdly call attention to the old by putting it in a new place, or "putting it" in a new way. For instance, you might call fresh attention to a beautiful song by bidding all sing it without their books, while you "line it out" earnestly and brightly. You might preface a hymn with a sentence or two telling why you think it just the hymn to sing in connection with the day's lesson. You might piece together several verses from different songs, and ask the school to sing them in immediate succession, without prelude or interlude, noting the connection and progress of the

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thought. You might stimulate the scholars in this and that corner by asking now one class and now another to consider themselves the leaders in the song next to be sung. You might have occasional "new-hymn" days, in which will be sung no song ever tried by the school. You might even steal ten minutes, on very rare occasions, for song services, carefully planned so as to bear effectively on the lesson for the day. The ways are almost endless whereby a music-loving, child-loving superintendent can introduce his two loves to each other.

A few more general suggestions. First, to the organist or pianist. Why do you think it necessary to hammer out an entire piece of music before you let the fidgety children sing it? They already know every note of it, and are not interested in your performance; nor is any one else. They can find the place quite as quickly as you can. Except in the case of new songs, do let us off with the chord, and we'll canonize you as a model of self-restraint and good sense.

Then to the precentor, or whoever is responsible for the time you keep. Why is it so slow? I never could see why hymns should be sung so drawlingly as to make it quite impossible to grasp their thought. Time yourself in singing your next hymn, then read aloud the same hymn, forcing yourself to occupy the same time, and you will see why it is that our singing leaves our minds quite absolute blanks. This grievous fault must be remedied with the children if the

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singing of hymns is ever to be, to the average grown-up, an intellectual and spiritual as well as a physical occupation.

And, to the same end, why is it that your school can sing readily, even without the book, the first two or three stanzas of so many songs, while every stanza beyond is an unknown land to them? It is because, owing chiefly to the slowness of our ordinary singing, we seldom compass the whole of a hymn. At the close of a well-written hymn is the climax, the thought up to which the whole has led, which binds it all together. Our songs, if they are to get hold upon our minds and lives, must be sung beyond their prelude, sung straight through.

To get hold of minds and lives,—that must be the end sought by all our singing.

Chapter XXXVIII

A Praying Sunday-School

IN no way can more Christianity be taught in less time than by a good prayer. A Sunday-school that is not opened with the right kind of prayer remains tight shut until the teachers get hold of it, while the right kind of prayer at the close of the lesson hour rivets the lesson on the week to come.

Yet I know of no point in Sunday-school management regarding which superintendents are more careless. The children must listen to Magellan prayers that circumnavigate the globe; to mechanical prayers, cast in stereotyped forms; to officious prayers that volunteer to teach the coming lesson; to peacock prayers that flaunt big words and fine phrases; to wrinkled prayers, dealing with experiences into which the children will not grow for three decades. In some schools the superintendent always makes the prayer himself, praying in the same terms and tones and order for the same things. Elsewhere the superintendent invites others to perform this service, but,

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with pitiless impartiality, calls upon all that will, heedless whether they are capable or totally unfit for the difficult duty.

For it is not easy to guide the devotions of these varied ages and characters. The words must be so simple that the youngest can understand them. The thoughts must be so noble as to furnish an uplift to the oldest. The expressions must be direct, as in the realized presence of Christ. The prayer must be brief, and bright, and deeply in earnest, sincere as a child.

To perform this task, therefore, no one should be invited merely for policy's sake, merely because he is a visiting clergyman, a church officer, or a good-hearted layman. Ask no one that does not know the glorious language of a child's prayer. Give notice beforehand, since this prayer, if any, should be thought over and prayed over. And if you fear the prayer will lack a certain quality, shrewdly incorporate its name in your invitation, asking for a brief prayer, or a simple prayer, or a prayer about few things.

I wonder that this exercise is so seldom fixed upon the children's attention and interest by their own vocal participation in it. Indeed, it is not always that the school is able to repeat the Lord's Prayer together with the freedom and force born of long custom. The school may easily be taught to chant the Lord's Prayer, and that may be made most genuine praying. There are many suitable short Bible prayers that children might learn to say together, such as "Let

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the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." Indeed, there are many prayer psalms that could be learned entire, the concert repetition of which would greatly enrich the Sunday-school hour. If yours is a model school, every scholar has his Bible, and Scripture prayers, not committed to memory, may be read in concert. And, besides, what more impressive conclusion to the session than the "Mizpah benediction," in which all voices join, or, perhaps better, the beautiful benediction in Numbers 6 : 24-26, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee," etc.?

Then there is the hymn-book. If it is a good one, it contains many beautiful prayer hymns. Let the scholars all bow their heads, and sing softly Miss Havergal's tender consecration hymn, or "Nearer, my God, to thee," and you will find all hearts indeed drawn nearer heaven. Occasionally let the school read together one of these same hymns, also with their heads bowed.

And, by the way,—though it deserves more than a "by the way,"—insist on the bowing of the head,—not that the attitude is important in itself, but the reverence that the attitude arouses is of the highest importance. Wait till all heads are bowed before you begin the prayer or permit another to begin it. The half-minute of quiet or semi-quiet needed to gain this end is not ill-bestowed. Moreover, I should strongly advise you to go one step farther, and once

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in a while have the entire school go down on their knees. This, the normal attitude of prayer, the children should be taught to assume in public, at least so often that it will not seem to them forced or unnatural.

Have you tried silent prayer? A blessed exercise it is, and one the children will love. Ask them to bend their heads or kneel, and then in perfect silence to pray for their teachers, or their pastor, or their dear ones at home, or some sick scholar. After a minute the superintendent will tenderly add a few closing sentences of vocal prayer.

And have you tried a chain prayer,—a prayer started by a leader, who will also close it, to which ten or twenty of the scholars contribute sentences of praise or petition? You will be astonished to see how many of the scholars will join in these prayers,—you will be astonished, that is, unless you are familiar with the training along this line so nobly accomplished in our modern young people's religious societies.

Still another way to obtain the scholars' careful heed to the prayer is to establish a form with which the superintendent will always begin his prayer, and which the entire school will repeat with him. The opening sentences of the Lord's Prayer may be used for such a purpose. Then, at the close of the prayer, after "for Jesus' sake," let all the scholars say "Amen."

An occasional Sunday-school prayer-meeting, held for ten minutes at the close of the lesson hour, will do much to inspire in the school a deeper spirit of

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worship ; that is, if the scholars themselves take part, and not the teachers only. And these Sunday-school prayer-meetings are magnificent opportunities for drawing the net. Hold them in a small room, that nearness may warm the coals of devotion to a glow. Do not hold them too frequently to be burdensome. Keep them brief and earnest. Let the teachers work for them in their classes, and use them as tests for their teaching. Above all, expect conversions in them, and, if you are faithful and faith-filled, you will get them.

This use of the scholar in the devotions of the school should be extended to his home. The superintendent may ask the scholars to pray every day during the coming week for the school, or for their teacher, or for their next lesson, that it may bring some one nearer Christ. For several weeks there may stand in bold letters on the blackboard a list of things that should be prayed for at home. The teacher, of course, must enforce these recommendations. If he will courageously hold once in a while a little prayer-meeting with his scholars, in the class-room, about the class-table, or, best of all, at his own home or at one of theirs, he will thereby teach them as much Christianity as otherwise he might in a year.

Indeed, the teacher has much to do in making yours a praying Sunday-school. To say nothing about the teacher's prayers for his scholars, which will be like steam to his pedagogic engine, and to say nothing about the united prayers of the teachers in

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the teachers' meetings, the teacher's conduct during the prayer in the school is in itself half the scholars' attention, the knowledge on the part of the scholars that their teacher is praying for them will spur their home devotions, and the teacher's simple, ready participation in the school prayers will prompt their own. An excellent occasional method of opening the school is by a succession of very brief—almost sentence—prayers from six or eight of the teachers. A frequent topic for discussion in the teachers' meeting should be how best to inculcate in the school the spirit of devotion, since this great result is to be won only by the co-operation of all the working forces of the school.

Much is gained in this matter if you gain variety. Sometimes ask the older scholars themselves, several of them in succession, to offer brief prayers at the opening of the school. Sometimes let the superintendent's opening prayer attract attention by its exceeding brevity,—only three or four sentences, embodying a single petition. Do not place the prayer always at the same place in the programme; now let it come before the singing, now after; now lay emphasis on the prayer introductory to the lesson hour, now on the prayer that closes the hour and seeks to drive home its lessons. Be dead in earnest,—no, be alive in earnest. Be thoughtful and versatile. Be bright and cheery and simple-hearted and sympathetic. In these prayers, that should furnish the life-blood to the school, be all things to all—children, if by all means you may win one of them.

Chapter XXXIX

S. S. and C. E.

A WORD must be said about the co-operation of the Sunday-school and that other great modern agency for work with the youth, the young people's religious society. Whatever is said will be as true of the Epworth Leagues, Baptist Unions, and other denominational organizations as of the Christian Endeavor societies; but since the latter, like the Sunday-schools, are found in all denominations, and since my own especial work lies among them, it will be quite appropriate in this connection, as well as less confusing, to use only the one name, Christian Endeavor.

Though of ages so unequal, "S. S." and "C. E." are sisters. Both are international and interdenominational. Both apply the principle of age classification to religious work. Both are strongly evangelical, and earnest seekers of souls. Both are held in strictest subordination to the church. And both are Bible lovers; for the Christian Endeavor pledge requires daily reading of the Bible, and the weekly prayer-

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meeting topic calls out no slight amount of Bible study. Moreover, this topic is usually in line with the week's Sunday-school lesson,—not the same as the latter, but suggested by it. The two agencies are at work in different fields. The one puts in, the other draws out. The one studies, the other practices. The Christian Endeavor society affords an excellent test for the Sunday-school, and is its complement. Whatever helps the one aids the other, and the two should labor hand in hand.

There are even some things that the Sunday-school might learn from its little sister. The principle of the pledge has proved attractive and powerful in the Christian Endeavor society. Why not adopt it in the Sunday-school, asking the scholars for voluntary vows that they will attend regularly and will spend fifteen minutes a day in studying their lessons? The monthly consecration meeting maintains wonderfully the spirituality, zeal, and discipline of the Christian Endeavor society. Why not a monthly consecration and experience meeting of Sunday-school teachers? Three or four Christian Endeavor societies cannot exist in the same town without forming a local union for mutual encouragement and consultation. Sunday-schools have their county conventions, but why not also this beautiful interdenominational fellowship among the Sunday-schools of every community? A large part of the remarkable success of Christian Endeavor is due to its being a work of the young people for themselves. There is close pastoral and

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church supervision, and it is welcomed; but the Endeavorers feel that it is their society, for whose honor they are responsible, and whose victories depend upon themselves. As far as possible, this spirit should be incorporated in the Sunday-school, so that the Bible study may not seem a work impressed on the scholars, but elected by them,—*their* work, and not their teachers'.

How can the Christian Endeavor society help the Sunday-school? Greatly in its prayer-meetings, by remembering the allied Sunday-school topic of the morning. Here is a chance for the teacher to enlarge upon some theme treated too hurriedly in the lesson hour, and for scholars to show their appreciation of their teacher by repeating some thought he brought out in the morning. If rightly managed, the Christian Endeavor meeting furnishes an admirable opportunity for advertising the Sunday-school, and practically applying the truths there taught.

But the help given may be far more direct. Every well-organized Christian Endeavor society has a Sunday-school committee, whose members put themselves under the direction of the superintendent, and make it the one object of their term's work to push in all possible ways the interests of the Sunday-school.

The members of this committee are usually chosen with an eye to their fitness for acting as substitute teachers. Sometimes the committee constitutes itself a normal class and studies the lessons a week in advance, considering especially the way to teach effec-

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tively. On the next Sunday, therefore, the superintendent will find any of these Endeavorers well prepared to fill a vacancy.

Everywhere, too, these Sunday-school committees help the busy teacher to look after the absent scholars and to care for the sick. It is far easier for these young people than for the teacher to learn the real causes of absence and to urge better attendance. In some schools the teachers fill out blank cards every Sabbath, giving the names of absentees or of the sick on whom they would like to have the Sunday-school committee call. These cards are collected, the calls made, and then the Endeavorers report to the teacher.

A kindred ministration is the gathering of new scholars. In many cities the Sunday-school committee has conducted a fruitful house-to-house canvass for new scholars, sometimes canvassing at the same time for new members of their society. Other committees distribute printed cards of invitation. Others organize "recruiting squads" among the scholars, and give little rewards to those that do the best work. Others make it their business to hunt out all the young strangers in the morning congregation and give them a personal invitation to the school. Still others distribute among the scholars "suggestion blanks," on which each scholar writes the names and addresses of young folks that might be won for the school. These Endeavorers call at the strangers' homes and go with them to the school, while others stand ready to welcome all strangers at the door and show them

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to appropriate classes. Thus they follow them up, that it may not be a case of "light come, light go."

The Endeavorers, under the direction of their Sunday-school committee, may be very helpful in the music. A choir or an orchestra may be organized from their numbers. An occasional song appropriate to the lesson may be rendered as a solo or quartette. When Sunday-school concerts are to be given, the Endeavorers will afford trained assistance. But especially the committee should become thoroughly familiar with the Sunday-school song-book, so that its members, scattered over the room, may carry with vigor any unfamiliar hymn, and give force and sprightliness to all the singing.

The Sunday-school librarian will find among the Endeavorers some efficient aids. The Sunday-school committee may advertise the new books in the Christian Endeavor meetings, and get the society to add to the library certain books of especial interest and helpfulness to Endeavorers. Sunday-school library socials have been held by some societies, the evening's exercises being so planned as to call attention to the best books in the library. The Endeavorers will help in covering books, in hunting up those that are lost, in reading new books and giving an opinion regarding them. Where subscriptions are taken for special papers or magazines, the Sunday-school committee will be glad to undertake this work. After these periodicals have been read, they will gather up the old copies to send to the hospitals.

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The decorating for Christmas and Easter exercises or for Children's Day may be assigned to the Christian Endeavor society. The Endeavorers may be set to gathering in the scholars for Rally Day. They should be called upon for help on all such special occasions.

Some societies give parties now and then to the classes that have the best record, or divide the school into sections according to age, and entertain each section in turn at a Christian Endeavor social, closing the series with a pleasant evening spent with the teachers and officers alone.

It would weary you if I should rehearse all the ways in which Christian Endeavor societies have proved helpful to the Sunday-school. Many a primary department has gained much from close association with the work of the superintendent of the Junior Christian Endeavor society. I have heard of a large number of places where the Endeavorers organized and maintained mission Sunday-schools—schools that in many instances have grown to churches. Often the Endeavorers take charge of the ushering of the school, furnish flowers for every session, offer rewards to the scholars for excellence in various directions, help with swift feet in the messenger service of the home department, turn their trained forces into an occasional Sunday-school prayer-meeting,—indeed, they are as ingenious in discovering ways of helping this elder sister of the Christian Endeavor society as they are zealous and persistent in these labors after they are inaugurated.

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If in some churches this help is not given, it is probably because it is not invited, or very likely through lack of organization. If the Christian Endeavor society has no Sunday-school committee, let the Sunday-school superintendent, who is a member of the society *ex officio*, interest himself in obtaining one. And then through this committee he can draft into the service all the other usual committees of the society—the lookout committee, to get new scholars; the prayer-meeting committee, to aid in the school's devotional exercises; the temperance and missionary committees, to give assistance in the special lessons on those themes; the music committee, to aid in the singing, and the flower committee, to help in the decorations; the social committee, to seek the absent and the sick; the good-literature committee, to help the librarian.

And if the Endeavorers do this, or a part of this, for the Sunday-school, why should not the Sunday-school do a little for the Christian Endeavor society? The superintendent may help it by calling upon it for assistance and by recognizing on fit occasions its officers and committees. He may even give it an occasional advertisement from the desk; and he, with his officers and teachers, may do much to put himself in touch with the young people by attending the Christian Endeavor meetings now and then. The teachers may help by introducing into their talks before the classes an occasional hint on the Christian Endeavor pledge or committee work, or by remem-

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bering the prayer-meeting topic and suggesting a thought or two that may be developed in the meeting, or by urging membership in the society upon those that do not already belong to it.

Thus it is seen how intimately these two organizations are related, and how much each may do to help the other. Do not allow them to labor apart. Parallel threads are weak; cables are made by twisting them together.

Chapter XL

Teachers in 8vo

WHAT the Sunday-school library should be depends on what the community is. These libraries, therefore, should not pattern after one another like peas in a pod, as is too often the case, but each should have an individuality of its own. The Sunday-school in a city, with an overflowing public library and an excellent public-school library at hand, has no excuse for distributing secular books; while such books may form a useful addition to the library of a country school.

Of course there is danger in admitting secular books to the Sunday-school library under any circumstances, and I would not for the world add one more to the many subtle inroads upon the Lord's day. If you place in your library any books that are not suitable Sunday reading, cover them with paper of a distinctive color, mark them "For week-day reading only," and watch them carefully, that you may withdraw them from circulation if you find them

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trenching on the sacred hours. With proper restrictions, however, the church may find here a blessed ministry to many book-hungry communities. Biographies like Irving's "Washington" or Holland's "Lincoln"; histories like Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic"; poems like "Snowbound," "The Idyls of the King," "Evangeline"; essays like Smiles' "Self Help" or Mathews' "Getting on in the World"; books of science like Winchell's "Sparks from a Geologist's Hammer" or Proctor's "Other Worlds than Ours,"—if you can get your scholars to read on week-days such books as these, you will deepen, broaden, and enrich the soil in which you do your Sunday sowing.

But the more the community needs books, the harder it is to raise money for them. This, however, is merely a difficulty of the start. A few books, shrewdly chosen, will create a hunger for more, and that hunger will open the pocketbooks.

Hold a book social, admission to which shall be a copy, old or new, of some good book. The entertainment at this social should be appropriate. Let each person that comes carry about him a token of some book, such as a card about his neck reading, "Who teaches you?" ("Hoosier School Master"!). Illustrate a poem with shadow pictures. Place about the room numbered portraits of authors for the company to name. Add readings and essays on literary themes.

A course of lectures and concerts is possible, now-

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adays, for almost any enterprising community, and the proceeds will give the library a start.

For a time you may charge two cents for the reading of each book, thus forcing the library itself to earn its double in the course of a year.

At the beginning,—or, for that matter, all the time,—the generous among the church-members may be urged to *lend* books to the library for a year at a time. Such books should be covered with different paper from the others, and plainly marked with the name of the lender and an injunction to especial carefulness in handling them.

The library will be generously supported, if its books are sensibly selected; but this is not an easy task. Do not leave it to any single man, but appoint the wisest men and women of the church a committee on selection, and require them all to read every book that is chosen. Obviously, the value of such a committee will increase with the growing years, and it should be a permanent body.

Many booksellers will send books on approval. The review columns in the religious papers should be regularly watched. The committee should be placed on the mailing-lists of all the best publishers, to receive their regular announcements of books. They should get into correspondence with the librarians of other schools, learning from them what books are popular and helpful. And, above everything else, they should get in contact with the scholars of their own school, to watch the practical effect of the books they select.

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Regarding the selection of books, first, some "dont's."

Don't choose any volume, no matter how famous, without reading every word of it. One of the grandest of biographies, for instance, is Franklin's autobiography; but you will not wish to put before young readers his chapter on his religion—or lack of it. Wonderfully inspiring essays are Emerson's; but here and there a sentence speaks of Christ as a mere man. A very stimulating booklet is "Blessed be Drudgery"; but one sentence spoils it for our use, since it places Jesus at the end of a list of philosophers at whose head stands Herbert Spencer.

Don't buy "fads." Wait and see whether the book now so much lauded is heard of next year.

Don't buy the books that have fittingly been called "a-little-child-shall-lead-them" stories. Bill Nye described them as tales relating how a dear little boy, though but five and a half and crippled, took in back stairs to scrub, and supported his widowed mother, and sent his sister to college.

Don't buy "libraries." As sensibly let a man that has never seen you order for you a suit of clothes.

Don't buy "sets" and "series" and "sequels." Judge every book on its merits.

Don't buy the books of one publishing-house alone, however excellent, any more than you would fill your home with the works of only one painter.

Don't confine your choice merely to the "Sunday-school writers." Books that are not virile enough to

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attract and help folks outside the Sunday-school are not likely to prove very useful inside.

Don't buy by authors. "Aunt Mary's Candlestick," by Jemima Jones, may have been the greatest success of the year in your school; but that is no reason why you should load up with "Aunt Mary's Dust-brush" and "Aunt Mary's Needlecase" and "Aunt Mary's Dish-mop," by the same industrious author.

In fine, don't buy any book, no matter who is its publisher or author, or what its reputation, unless that particular book meets some particular need of your particular school.

And now, what shall we buy? Stories, of course, in delightful measure. The Sunday-school library has the highest authority for teaching in parables. And for these stories there are three requirements.

First, they must be attractive. What is the use of a book if it will not be read?

Second, they must be natural. He who is the Truth will never bless a story of lifeless, jerking, galvanized puppets, gibbering forced aphorisms and preposterous piety, and acting in a red fire of sensational incidents. Real boys and girls, real men and women, real life, and therefore life intensely interesting,—these must dwell in our Sunday-school stories.

And finally, the stories must be helpful. Each must have a point, a purpose. They must be outright for Christ, if they are to make outright Christians.

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Don't neglect the old-fashioned stories, such as the Rollo books. They are full of meat. Especially helpful are such stories of Bible times as "Ben Hur." Provided their imaginings do not outrun the Bible facts, we can scarcely have too many of them. Do not forget, either, the books that tell the Bible stories themselves, in simple language, for the little ones. Above all stories, do not omit the "Pilgrim's Progress," but buy a volume in large type and beautifully illustrated.

Next to stories, what? Emphatically, lives of the great Christians; above all, missionaries. There are brief, bright, well-illustrated lives of Mackay, the marvelous mechanic, Carey, the consecrated cobbler, Paton, the hero of the New Hebrides, Livingstone the daring, Martyn the saintly, Judson the sagacious, Patteson, the white knight of Melanesia, and a host of other grand men. What inspiration to a splendid life is to be gained from the story of Madagascar's dusky martyrs, or the account of Allen Gardiner's magnificent death in Patagonia! What a spur to active service is the tale of the winning of Hawaii, the opening up of Japan, the self-sacrificing missions of the Moravians, the daring ride of Whitman across the continent for the salvation of Oregon!

Then, there are the lives of great reformers like Luther, John Howard, Wilberforce, John B. Gough, and of such superb Christians as Gladstone, Wesley, Washington, William of Orange. There is no need of a long list. The trouble is not to find the books, but to awaken among your scholars a hunger for the

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real heroism of real men as opposed to the imaginary heroism of fiction.

Another section of your library should contain books that bear directly on the work of the school. There must be the best works on teaching, such as Trumbull's "Teachers and Teaching," Schauffler's "Ways of Working," Boynton's "The Model Sunday-school," and Du Bois' "The Point of Contact." There must be some account of the Bible, like Rice's "Our Sixty-six Sacred Books"; some brief and attractive manual of Christian evidences, like Fisher's or Robinson's; some life of Christ, like Geikie's or Farrar's; some account of the history, polity, and teachings of your denomination. Thompson's "The Land and the Book," Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," Geikie's "Hours with the Bible," Taylor's "Moses, the Lawgiver," Deems' "The Gospel of Common Sense," Pierce's "Pictured Truth," Butterworth's "The Story of the Hymns,"—each of these is a type of a class of books helpful to teachers, —and to scholars also, if they can be brought to read them. Add, for the temperance lessons, such books as Banks' "The Saloon-keeper's Ledger," Gustafson's "The Fountain of Death," and Strong's "Our Country" and "The New Era."

I wonder that so few Sunday-school libraries contain the great Christian poems, such as "Paradise Lost," Browning's "Saul," Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal," Arnold's "The Light of the World," and many more that would illuminate the lessons.

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Many fascinating books of science for young folks have been written expressly from the Christian standpoint. Why not add to the library such books as Kingsley's "Glaucus," Burr's "Ecce Coelum," Agnes Gibberne's "Sun, Moon, and Stars," Keyser's "In Bird-land"?

I may seem to be suggesting books for the older scholars mainly. Let me here urge that equal care and thought be spent on the volumes for the little tots and the "intermediates." Their books are not so interesting to the mature-minded committee, and so they are more likely to be chosen at haphazard.

This is especially true of the books for the primary department. Two or three pounds of their diminutive volumes are shoveled up in a mass, read by title, and tucked in at the end of the list. This carelessness is especially injurious, because it is at their age that the reading habit is formed, and it is of the utmost importance that the tiniest books in the library shall be bright, helpful, and of real literary value. To discover these will prove one of the most difficult tasks of the conscientious committee.

Do not give up the old favorites. When Susan Coolidge's "Katy Did" series wears out, give the old books away to some poorer school and get a fresh set of the same. Remember that new scholars are all the time entering, and that there is no recommendation for a book so effective as the young people's own testimony, "I have read it, and I know you will like it."

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Have an eye to the paper and type and binding. Many books intended for Sunday-school libraries are printed on stiff, pulpy paper, that refuses to remain open at any place without cracking the back, and use a cramped and formal typography more suitable to a funeral sermon than to a book intended to attract young folks.

If your funds allow, it is an admirable plan to obtain more than one copy of certain books especially likely to be needed by several classes at once, such as books on Christian evidences, on the Bible, and on the themes of the current lessons.

It is one thing to gather a library, and quite another to get it used, and well used. The first point is to introduce it to the teachers. They must consider these "teachers in 8vo" to be their assistants, and must be thoroughly acquainted with them. *Every teacher should read every book in the library that is within the range of his scholars' comprehension.* How otherwise can he guide their reading? Of course the most hasty perusal will be sufficient, provided it shows the teacher the heart of the book. A teacher should learn the useful art of rapid reading.

Let the teacher, as part of his preview of the quarter's lessons, make out a list of library books that teach the principal truths of the quarter ahead of him, and give this list to each scholar with the first lesson. A few minutes of each teachers' meeting might well be spent in giving suggestions regarding the use of the library to illustrate the next lesson. Let the teacher

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often refer to these books in the course of his teaching, learn what appropriate books each scholar has been reading, and get him to give the class some account of them.

Often it will be well for the teacher to ask some scholar to read a certain story or biography or poem during the week, and be ready to tell about it for an illustration of next Sunday's truths.

If you have no teachers' meeting, once in a while the librarian may mention at the prayer-meeting some library book of timely helpfulness, or the pastor might even speak of it from the pulpit.

It is far better to buy the books a few at a time. In some schools a new book is added to the library every Sunday of the fifty-two. The chairman of the library committee comes forward with the book in his hand, and describes it in a few bright, brisk sentences. Its title and number are plainly written on the blackboard in front of the school. The choice is varied, —now a book for the youngest, next week one for the older scholars.

Some libraries have a special case for the new books, where every one can readily find them and examine them. Indeed, the scholars are far more easily introduced to all the books, new and old, if they have free access to the shelves and can handle the books themselves, thus coming to know each as an old friend. By the way, I do not believe in covering the books. Covered books have no individuality.

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Happy the school that has a good-sized room for its library. Some even get it by placing the books in a house next door to the church.

I have known schools to get acquainted with their books by coming together for a "library evening," in which the wealth of the library was disclosed by various speakers, each trying to interest the school in one book, or class of books.

After all, the library catalogue may be the best agent of introduction. Every library should have one, though it is only a home-made affair, manufactured on a typewriter or a hectograph. Every book should be briefly described, so that the scholars may know, for instance, the scene and purpose of each story, the kind of man described in each biography, and whether it is a book for old, young, or primary scholars. Some librarians mark one catalogue for each class, indicating the books especially pleasing to scholars of the average age of the class, so that the teacher may guide their selection. Others divide the catalogue into sections, each containing the books appropriate to one division of the school.

Not only should a teacher know *what* his scholars are reading, but he should find out *how* they read. He should try to teach them the art of reading. The demoralizing habit of reading merely for the moment's pleasurable excitement and the next moment's forgetting may be formed as easily with Sunday-school stories as with newspapers.

Some librarians, to this end, place in each book a

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slip of paper, and the scholar is expected to write upon this at least one thing he has learned from the book, telling at the same time how he likes it.

If the scholars, as will likely happen, are reading little but stories, the librarian himself can do much to promote more solid reading by reporting every month to the school the number of stories read, the number of biographies, etc. This report may be made by classes, and teachers and scholars should be urged to make a better record next month.

Let me close this chapter with a few points regarding library management.

It is poor economy of labor to change the librarian frequently, so much of his usefulness depends on his familiarity with the books, and that familiarity requires time to gain. If you can find a librarian that does not especially need the benefit of the Bible study, one that loves and understands children, keep him in office as long as may be. But be sure to give him an assistant to aid the children in their selections, or record the books while the librarian is consulting with the children; also to take the librarian's place when he is sick or absent, or possibly to take turns with him in presiding over the library, so that each may recite the lesson half the time.

The books will be gathered up on the entrance of the scholars. A table or a basket or an usher may be placed at the door for this purpose. If the scholars cannot be given access to the books and select them themselves, the librarians will pass quietly around

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among the classes, leaving the new books at each table; but these books are never to be given to the scholars until just before they leave.

The most effective record, yet a very simple one, may be made by any librarian. Give to each scholar a card bearing his name and his number. On this he writes a list of about ten numbers of the books he prefers. As the librarian places his card in one of these new books, that number is scratched off and the date written opposite. At the same time the librarian writes the scholar's number and the date in his library catalogue after the number of the book taken out, and upon a list of the scholars' numbers writes the number of the book after the number of the scholar. When the book is returned lines are drawn through these records. Thus at any time the librarian can see what books are out, who has them, how long they have had them, what books each scholar has read, and how often each book has been taken out.

As the Sunday-school library should teach punctuality, among other good things, the librarian should strictly require every book to be brought back at the end of the week or fortnight, no matter who the scholar may be, or whether the book is in much or little demand. It may not be best to establish any system of fines, but a postal-card notice should be sent in aggravated cases, and sometimes the teacher should be asked to look up the book. It will spur the scholars to promptness if they know that each instance

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of tardiness is recorded against their names on the library's records.

The proper care of books is another good thing the library should teach. Any marked blemish in a book should be noted when it is sent out; and when a book is injured by a scholar, the librarian should always speak to him about it, or get the teacher to do this if the child is a stranger to him. A plainly printed slip urging careful handling, forbidding dog's ears, and the like, may well be pasted in each book.

It is sometimes possible and advantageous to open the library at some time during the week, especially on prayer-meeting evenings, when the older folks can select their books, or, for the benefit of the children, on Friday afternoons after school.

Some classes will like to have little libraries of their own, containing Bibles for each scholar, Bible atlas, a Revised Bible, a Bible dictionary, a concordance, etc. Always it is well to arrange for the entire school a special reference library, the contents of which will largely change from quarter to quarter. In it will be placed the general Bible helps and whatever books are of special interest for the quarter's lessons. The scholars may be sent to these reference shelves during the lesson hour. At least one school has a special case, always open, for books of this nature, and places the case in the front of its main schoolroom.

On the whole, it will be seen that this chapter is a plea for a Sunday-school library that is a corporate part of the Sunday-school teaching, that will help the

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teacher on Sunday, and carry his teaching through the week. Such a library virtually adds scores of the wisest men and women to the teaching force of the school, and multiplies by many hours the pitiful thirty minutes given to the lesson.

Chapter XLI

Around the Council Fire

OUR conventions are the grand council fires in the war the Sunday-school is waging against the forces of evil. The flame of the Holy Spirit should blaze in their midst. With military directness they should go straight to the immediate needs, find out what they are, plan the campaign. Orderly and in turn, all should have a part in them, not only the speakers, but the audience, one school and every school. With hearts uplifted, with zeal on fire, every teacher should leave the gathering bent on more valiant service.

Only a well-planned convention can effect this,— a convention long thought over and prayed over, not merely by one man, but by many. These meetings not seldom remind one of a house of which the owner takes possession prematurely. Over yonder the scaffolding is still up, here they are just removing it, the sound of the hammer and the saw is everywhere, and the smell of wet plaster is in the air. Thus in many conventions. Here and there the president

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bustles around, over the platform, through the audience. The local committee of arrangements are like bees before swarming. We begin late and with apologies; so we continue.

The model convention, however, began at least as far back as the preceding convention. At that gathering suggestions for the next meeting were called for and obtained. During the following weeks the president visited or corresponded with every school in the district, trying to discover its excellences and lacks, that the convention might exhibit the one and supply the other. Indeed, at the very opening of the preceding convention the new officers, if any, were elected, that during the sessions they might have ears open and brains and tongues active, gathering hints for the profitable meeting they were to plan. Therefore it was early known precisely what the coming convention was to teach, and that convention, instead of bumping along Haphazard Lane, rolls smoothly over Purpose Avenue.

Two methods will promote this preparedness of the audience, without which the best-prepared programme largely fails: there should be a convention press committee, whose pleasant task it is to pack the papers with appetizing details of the coming meetings; and every school should be supplied, at least two weeks beforehand, with a large number of the printed programmes. If these are attractively got up, if the topics meet genuine needs and are expressed brightly, suggestively, and not as Dr. Dryasdust would formu-

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late them, and if the various superintendents and pastors advertise the convention wisely, the audience that will come together will be ready for its work.

So large a part of most Sunday-school convention audiences comes from the immediate locality that especial effort should be made to interest beforehand the church and the town in which the meetings are held; and this not merely for the sake of the convention, but for the quickening of Sunday-school interests throughout the community. But if only a few persons are gathered, do not make the mistake of losing them in a large room, with scores of empty pews into which their zeal can creep away and hide itself. The same coals that grow black in all outdoors will make a little stove red-hot.

No small part of the preparation that is to make a success of your convention is the careful and *enterprising* selection of speakers. The best policy is to choose none from "policy." Select the men that can inspire and instruct, though you must crowd out some pastor of a big church or some man with a big name. From the teachers themselves call out suggestions as to speakers as well as to topics. Search through your district for original workers, plummet men, women that win the hearts of the children, and get them to tell the convention how they do it. By all means call in the successful Christian teacher in the secular schools. If possible, import a skilled worker from outside your district. Fresh air will come in with him, the sense of a wider outlook. Only, he

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must not be an opinionated egotist, one of those *ex-cathedra* men, but a warm-hearted brother in the Lord; and it is far better to use him in several short speeches scattered over the programme than in one long address.

The wise choice of topics is quite as important as a wise choice of men to treat them. Let all programme-makers remember what the convention is to do: not to show off leaders, or to raise money, or to get acquainted, or to have a good time, but to learn more about teaching and managing Sunday-schools. Three aims must be set before every Sunday-school convention: to arouse new love for the Bible, to arouse new love for souls, to arouse new zeal for bringing these two together. Every convention, then, should divide its time among three classes of topics: the Bible, the children, the teaching.

1. *The Bible.* Such themes as these are suggested: "How the Bible differs from all other books." "Recent Bible discoveries." "My way of studying the Bible." "Bible-marking." "How to study Exodus." "The use of a 'teacher's Bible.'" "Interleaved Bibles,—why and how." "The value of the Victoria revision." "The study of the Bible as literature." "What is the best commentary?" "Reading the Bible in course,—how to make it most profitable." "The Septuagint and its importance." "How the Bible came down to the printing-press." "The story of our English Bible."

2. *The Children.* "Imagination in children."

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“Reasoning processes that a child will not appreciate.”
“Why children love stories.” “Important differences between the child’s mind and ours.” “Put yourself in his place.” “A child’s confidence: how lost; how won.” “Prigs: how not to make them.” “The self-conscious child and how to treat him.” “Lessons from the playground.” “Kindergarten principles of value in the Sunday-school.”

3. *The Two Brought Together.* “What is a good question?” “How to get the class to ask questions.” “A class that keeps its own order.” “Getting young people in love with the Bible.” “The teacher’s voice.” “Their own Bibles.” “The quarterly left at home.” “How to make the Bible real to the children.” “Some tests our teaching should stand.”

This outline does not omit the school management, and occasional discussion of the work of superintendents and other officers will belong under the last head; but the teachers are so many compared with the officers that *their* work should be treated the more generously. I think most convention programmes deal far too much with the machinery of the work, any way.

The best mode of helping the officers is by an officers’ conference; and if the convention holds but two sessions, I would urge that one of them be broken up into conferences. In one room the primary workers may meet; in another, the superintendents and their assistants; in others, the librarians, the secretaries, the choristers, the teachers of intermediate classes, the teachers of adult classes, the heads of home depart-

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ments, the pastors. Programmes for these conferences should be arranged with as much care as for the main convention, and nothing should be done at random. It is a good plan, at the opening of these little simultaneous gatherings, to appoint one member of each to take notes of the best things and report them succinctly to the entire body when it reassembles.

There are three classes of topics that I especially delight to see on a convention programme. First, the fundamentals. We must not forget the host of new workers constantly coming into our ranks. "How to ask a question" is an old, old theme; but there are enough new teachers to keep it forever fresh and pertinent. Second, new methods, exploited by authorities, by practical workers. Third, what I call "encouragements," topics that inspire, cheer, comfort, victories gained, rewards in sight. Hallelujah themes.

To these I must add a fourth: work for the audience. I would give the listeners a chance to "talk back" about once every hour, and something to do, besides listening, every half-hour. Question-boxes on practical topics are incomparable interest-quickeners. An answer-box is a reversed question-box. It contains written answers by the teachers, two or three questions of wide scope and great importance being propounded on the programme; such questions as: "What do you do with pert children?" "How do you get your scholars to study their lessons?" A wise leader, with the grace of conciseness, is required for both these exercises.

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Yes, and he is needed for the "open parliaments," or conversational discussions of helpful topics by brisk dialogue between audience and platform. These may be made merely parade-grounds for "smart" leaders, or genuine experience meetings, true council fires. It is wise to send a special invitation to your best teachers, asking them to be prepared with suggestions or questions for the open parliament, that it may start off with momentum already obtained. A summarist, too, is a good appointment; he listens quietly to the open parliament, and at the close gathers up, in a few sentences that stick, whatever is best worth preserving out of the discussion.

The open parliament most commonly held consists merely of dry and formal reports from each school, the roll being called. If such an exercise is held, place in charge of it a man thoroughly familiar with the schools, and able by brisk questioning to elicit a report that will picture the one school and stimulate the others.

A good presiding officer is half a convention. His first duty is to have a distinct understanding with each speaker that he is not to trespass on the next man's time, and his second duty is to cry "Stop, thief!" if the speakers do so trespass. The convention management should be a model for the Sunday-schools in every way, and in none more imperatively than in this of promptness.

But also as to order. Oh, the weak-kneed or the purblind presidents, that allow the talking, whisper-

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ing, walking about of a few to filch from the many half the value of the meetings! Stop the speaker. Call a halt on the entire convention. Don't proceed another step till quiet is restored, and maintained. Be a platform czar, and your audience will be your happy serfs.

Then, the president is master of ceremonies. So much in acquaintanceships depends on tactful introductions! He should deliver to each successive speaker an audience that is in a glow of anticipation, and when the speaker is done,—yes, and all through,—his own cordial hands shou'd lead the hearty applause, and he should take time for an appreciative word before passing to the next topic.

If the presiding officer is to do all this, he must plan beforehand almost every sentence he will use in introducing speakers or opening the discussions. He is to be suggestive; he is to set brains a-throbbing with eagerness and tongues aching with things to say; and he is to do it all in twenty words. Brevity, good humor, suggestiveness,—these, in this order, are the chairman's prime virtues.

At the opening of every convention the key-note of formality, routine, and perfunctoriness is struck in the address of welcome and the response. Their every word could safely be predicted in advance. The world is waiting for a programme committee that will be courageous enough to leave them out. If the pastor of the entertaining church has helpful ideas on Sunday-school work, by all means place him

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on the programme somewhere ; but don't make a rut of him.

At the very outset strike the key of prayer. Insert here and there throughout the programme a quiet ten minutes with the great Teacher. By all means close with a devotional half-hour—not a hasty prayer punctuated with the snapping of watches. Sentence prayers by scores, prayer psalms softly repeated, prayer hymns read with bowed heads,—the convention should furnish an inspiration and model for the devotions of all the schools represented.

Scarcely less important is the element of song. Unconsciously to themselves, the audience should become a normal training-class, learning how to conduct the singing of their schools in fresh and uplifting ways. Many, if not all of the methods mentioned in my chapter on this theme find fit application to the convention.

The social features deserve careful attention. Set the teachers to talking together ; conversation was Socrates' university. One of the most helpful events may be a light supper given by the entertaining church. A small fee is charged, all sit down together, and at the close a series of happy speeches will bring out flashes of wit and bushels of sense.

The business should be kept under. Introduce it a little at a time, rather than spend a fatiguing hour and a half. Make no parade of money-raising. Giving should be done quietly. Teach your teachers the grace of envelopes. Reduce all business to a

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minimum, remembering that the convention comes together not for legislation, but for inspiration.

The Sunday-school convention is not only a conference, but an exposition. Here should be gathered whatever new teaching apparatus any school has bought: wall-maps, sand-maps, relief-maps, material for object-lessons, portable blackboards, colored pictures illustrating the lessons, specimens of class tests, library catalogues, new kinds of class-books, collection-envelopes, singing-books, new editions of the Bible, lesson helps of all kinds,—it is clear how varied and valuable a collection may easily be brought together when once the teachers and officers understand what is wanted.

The library of the entertaining school should be open for visiting librarians to examine books and methods. The best new books might be brought in from all the libraries of the district, and if each school sent only one or two, the entire exhibit would furnish many a suggestion to wide-awake library committees.

One of the most important exhibits is a Sunday-school map of the district, indicating where schools are in existence, and also where schools might and should be placed.

There is one kind of exhibit that should rarely be made, if ever: an exhibit of the children themselves, either to "speak pieces" or to play Sunday-school and be taught. The latter use of them has advantages, but, to my mind, the gain to the audience is nothing compared to the children's increase of self-

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consciousness. I hide my head whenever I think of such a mock recitation in which I figured when a little boy, and remember how proud I was of my pert forwardness in answering all of the questions ; before all those people, too!

In closing, let us ask how the convention results may be gathered up, preserved, and sown broadcast. A notebook should be in the hand of each attendant, —either given away or sold. The speakers should so mark their points and emphasize the subdivisions of their addresses that the thoughts can readily be grasped and retained. A printed syllabus is a great assistance to this end, and if the printing-press is too costly, a manifold may be used. Blank pages should be left in the programme, to invite to note-taking.

And then, the new plans all jotted down, the felicitous expressions written out *verbatim*, the facts and figures clearly noted, let the convention be widely reported. Not merely should the convention press committee, that heralded the gathering through the papers, continue their labors long enough to render their previous work most fruitful, but every teacher present should carry the convention's best to his teachers' meeting and his class ; yes, and to the church prayer-meeting. Thus will the ardor of the council fire spread throughout the army.

Chapter XLII

The Incorporation of Ideas

CERTAIN arts, such as sculpture, painting, and architecture, have been named the fine arts by some man who had not learned to look inward, and see what an infinitely finer art is any that attempts to fashion the human soul. The pastor's and the teacher's arts, which are in essence one, though the tyranny of language forbids calling them the fine arts, may be given even a nobler title; they are the high arts.

We would sit down with bated breath and tense-drawn nerves to take to pieces for the first time the delicate machinery of a watch for cleaning and re-adjustment. If a sovereign diamond were placed in our hands for faceting, we would study for days its cleavage plane, its natural angles, and its matrix, and press it to the revolving wheel at last with timidity and shrinking. But when the most marvelously delicate, impressionable, yet abiding thing in the world is placed in our hands, together with the mightiest

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yet finest tools, and under conditions constantly varying, and we are told to fashion a human soul into truth and nobility, we sit down with confident smiles, and whack away.

It is impossible for a Sunday-school teacher to magnify his office. He needs a spiritual telescope, rather, to see above it and below it and on all sides of it. We Sunday-school teachers constitute an unordained ministry, whose functions are as sacred as those of the pulpit, though less inclusive. If we are faithful, conversions will be as frequent results of our lesson questions as of the pastor's sermons. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers." Let us desire earnestly the greater gifts; but if God calls us to be neither missionary nor pastor, but Sunday-school teacher, even that calling is too high for us fully to attain.

It is an anomaly to which the Christian world is just awaking that workers permit themselves to enter on this sacred art with no apprenticeship. Indeed, if such untrained workers were not admitted, there would soon be no Sunday-schools in the world to admit them. Long as the seminaries for ministerial preparation have existed, it is only recently that training-schools for lay workers have been formed. May they grow and multiply!

But until enlarged Christian activity places one of these blessed institutions within reach of each consecrated layman, we must do the best we can with other means of growth. We must organize regular Sunday-

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school conventions and teach one another there. We must build one another up in enthusiastic teachers' meetings. We must use the best lesson helps. We must read greedily every book and every article that promises to give us new ideas and methods and inspiration.

Now some object to all this. "You are needlessly discouraging us," they say. "You are making a very simple matter appear complicated; an easy one seem difficult. Christ's yoke is easy; Christ's gospel is plain; he will give us in that Sunday-school hour what we are to say. Your minute directions as to methods of study, as to concordance and commentary and maps, are flying in the face of Providence. The Spirit bloweth where he listeth."

The answer to all this is simple, and consists mainly in an appeal to experience. Simple and plain as Christ's message is, human lives are very complicated, and it is no simple matter or easy task to lay the Saviour's simple healing alongside their varied ills. Christ's burden is light; if it were heavier it would be easier to get paradoxical humanity to accept it. Christ will instruct us what to say, provided we have so trained our heart and brain that his words will not fall as senseless babble from our tongues. The Spirit does breathe where he listeth, but the experience of these centuries ought to teach us that God is never present in power where work and prayer have not invited him.

Haphazard work is not equal to thoughtful work.

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Minute directions that would be wasted on a barn-painter are a necessity of the artist. Impromptu never yet won a race with Preparation. And I know that many a teacher is mourning over his empty hands who might be rejoicing over great sheaves if his sowing had been more liberal and his teaching more painstaking.

And yet I sympathize with the weary discouragement of which all teachers feel a twinge when high ideals of teaching are held out before them. We are sure we are doing our best, already. It annoys us to be shown a better best. Our work is hard enough. It troubles us to be told that we must work harder before it can ever become easy. And especially, we are so confused by the multiplicity of good things we may do, of improvements we may make, that we do and make none of them.

Now the secret of success in all arts lies in this: the Incorporation of Ideas. The reception of ideas, the appreciation and praise of them, this is nothing, though many are satisfied to stop here; but the incorporation, the embodiment of them, this makes the artist. The artist is the man that is hungry for ideas, —for the ideal, that is; the man that, like Paul, proves them all by the tests of thought and experience, and then holds fast whatever is good, until it has become part of himself, until it is incorporated.

The artist is a man, too, that above all men knows the importance of trifles. The contour must be molded to nature precisely, the statue finished to the

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finger-nail, the machine accurate in every line and surface. He will not try to attain the ideal at a bound; it is made up, he knows, of many ideas. He grasps one idea, and fixes that forever. Then, he has power for another.

One point at a time, then, fellow-laborers in this blessed work; one idea from an eager throng appealing to you in books, lectures, or papers, proved and found good, and then held fast by prayerful practice, by never-yielding effort, until it is added to the company of your unconscious forces. And then, in this power, to add another to it! Thus alone can we win, from Christ's university, the highest of all degrees, Masters of his Art!

Chapter XLIII

From a Superintendent's Notebook

AN egotist is foredoomed to failure in the Sunday-school. The worker that hopes for success must cast to the winds any foolish pride in originality, and seek far and wide for the wisest ideas and the freshest methods. A superintendent or a teacher without a notebook is only half a superintendent or teacher. Its pages should rapidly grow rich with plunder. The little white friend must be at hand when he attends conventions, when he reads, when he talks with other workers, when he thinks and prays over his sacred tasks.

The two chapters that follow are merely specimen pages of such notebooks. While I have utilized them to gather up various plans and experiences that could not fittingly find place elsewhere in the book, their chief purpose is to illustrate the wide-awake catholicity that must animate every successful worker in Sunday-schools.

It is right to say—though this is a matter of course

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—that a large majority of these paragraphs are condensed from that great storehouse of Sunday-school lore, the "Sunday-school Times."

Their Own Review.—Scholars are likely to answer with special zest the questions prepared by other scholars. One school asks its classes in turn to furnish three questions on each lesson, which are proposed to the entire school at the close of the lesson hour. From these questions are selected a number for the quarterly review. They are "manifolded," and written answers are expected from all present.

Out of Order.—An excellent review scheme was arranged by a superintendent who gave his school a list of twenty-six events in the life of Christ, all jumbled up, and asked them to come next Sunday prepared to arrange them in chronological order.

A School Review.—For reviewing the lesson before the entire school, select one class a week beforehand and give it ten or twelve comprehensive questions, from the quarterly or original. At the close of the lesson ask this class to rise and answer the questions as another class, also rising, asks them. Let all the classes take turns in this service.

School Reviews.—For a change, it is well to incorporate the entire school in a general review,—omitting, of course, the younger classes. One person may conduct the review, or the questions on each lesson may be asked by a different teacher. Different classes may be assigned special lessons to illustrate

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by the concert repetition of Bible verses, or by a stanza of some song. One lesson of the quarter may be assigned to each class, and the questions that will be asked may be given to that class a week or two beforehand. In this case, general questions for the entire school should occasionally be interspersed.

A Teachers' Supper.—Once a year, at least, bring together all the teachers and officers around a well-filled table. After-dinner speeches, cheery and merry, may follow, and then a pleasant evening's entertainment.

The Annual Meeting.—Make this an event. A supper with bright speeches, the business meeting to follow; a brisk literary and musical entertainment; an introductory talk by some practical worker from abroad,—these are some of the ways of distinguishing the occasion.

Badges.—Any Sunday-school festival will be given eclat by the use of badges. The children will be proud to wear them, and will treasure them as souvenirs. They may be made almost without cost if you will use bright-colored cambric, and print upon them with a hand-stamp.

A Sunday-School Day.—If not once a year, at least once every few years, it is well worth while to make the Sunday-school the theme of all the exercises on the Lord's day,—both morning and evening services, and the Christian Endeavor meeting. The subject has so many practical aspects that much good will be done in addition to the quickening of the Sunday-school.

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The Home Department.—Simply a promise to study the lesson at home for half an hour each week—that is the scheme of the home department. You may add visitors, records, reports, *ad libitum*, but the home department may be complete and satisfactory without these. The plan is so simple that any school can use it, and so fruitful of blessed results that no school dare neglect it. A thorough canvass for members of the home department seldom fails to bring new members into the main school at once, and as the home study arouses interest, new scholars are continually added from this source, besides the scores of aged and shut-ins whose lives are thus led into the green pastures of the Word.

Home Department Day.—On this occasion a special effort is made to bring to the Sunday-school the entire home department. They sit together, and special services are held in their honor and for their benefit.

Parents' Day.—Make a special effort once a year to bring out all the parents of the scholars. Issue special printed invitations. Have a printed programme. Let the exercises be the regular working of the school, with merely one short address to the parents in addition.

A Parents' Social.—Parents and teacher should know one another, and there is no more gracious way to bring this about than by an evening spent together at the teacher's house.

Purpose Cards.—To stimulate the school in needed ways, have a "purpose card" printed. It will read,

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in tabular form, "I will endeavor to attend more faithfully, to prepare my lesson better, to get a new scholar," etc. Each member of the school signs his card, marks with crosses the "purposes" he makes his own, and returns the card to the superintendent.

Installing the New Officers.—This should be done with some ceremony, including a very short address by the pastor, another by the outgoing superintendent or prominent officer, another by a representative of the incoming group, and an earnest prayer,—all to occupy no more than ten minutes. The scholars will have more respect for leaders thus honored, and the officers themselves will be more likely to magnify their office.

The Old Superintendent.—Some schools elevate the assistant superintendent regularly to the superintendency. Other schools adopt the opposite course, and make the superintendent of one year the assistant superintendent of the next. Either plan secures continuity of method.

A True Assistant.—The assistant superintendent should be prepared to do, in the superintendent's absence, everything the superintendent ordinarily does. How can he be prepared to do this unless the superintendent regularly shares all kinds of work with his assistant?

Help from the Public School.—In most communities a very inspiring series of lectures might be obtained from Christian teachers in the secular schools and

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colleges, the purpose of each lecture being to show how, according to the best pedagogical methods, a certain lesson might be taught, or Sunday-school teaching in general be carried on.

Flowers at Home.—You will delight your school, and teach them many lessons, if you give each scholar—or get the teachers to do this—a bulb, a package of seeds, or a small potted plant like a rose. Hold an exhibition to show the results, and then have the flowers given to the sick, the hospitals, the poor, or sold for missions.

Easter Lilies.—A few cents invested in lily bulbs will make a beautiful Easter for your school. Give one to each scholar for him to raise, or, possibly, one to each class. The flowers, after Easter Sunday, are to be sent to the aged, the sick, and the poor.

An Easter Gift.—Some Sunday-schools give each scholar, on Easter day, a little rosebush or a package of seeds, that they may be tended and urged to bloom by Children's Day, when they are all brought in.

Vacation Transfers.—Some schools, when their scholars leave for a vacation, give them letters to schools where they will visit. These are printed forms, and include a detachable blank report, which, when filled out and returned, will show the scholar's attendance on the other school during his absence.

Planned Prayer-Meetings.—It will greatly promote the devotional character of your school if you take twenty minutes each month for a prayer-meeting. Select four or five to offer prayer, and have them sit

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on the platform. A brief, tender talk from the superintendent and bright singing will complete a memorable meeting.

A Carryall.—I have heard of Sunday-schools that maintained omnibuses or large carriages, to gather up and carry to the school children whose homes were so far away that they could not otherwise attend.

Neighborhood Schools.—Distant groups of farmers' families, and others that cannot reach the school, should be organized in neighborhood Sunday-schools.

A New Object Each Month.—The scholars' offerings should be an education not only in the instinct of giving, but also in the intelligent choice of objects for giving. Every Sunday-school should have a benevolence committee, which carefully selects for each month a new object of beneficence. On the last Sabbath of each month a word should be said about the object that appeals for the gifts of the next month. This brief account should, of course, be supplemented by the teachers in their classes.

The Envelope System.—This plan of giving, which has done so much for our churches, should be used everywhere in the Sunday-school. Give each class a number and each scholar a set of dated envelopes, one for each Sunday, bearing his class number. Call for a contribution from each scholar each Sunday. Urge that all absent scholars send their contributions, or bring them the next Sunday. From this *systematic* giving you may go on to *proportionate* giving by impressing on the scholars their duty to set apart

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for God some regular proportion, say one tenth, of all the money they receive. If the school takes up monthly collections for special benevolent objects, the envelopes for these Sundays may be of a different color. If, as should always be the case, the expenses of the school are met by the church, leaving the entire school collections to be devoted to missions and charitable causes, the school committee on benevolences may select a different object of giving for each month. This object should then be written on each envelope for that month.

A Jug-Breaking.—One of the best ways of teaching children the value of little gifts and the importance of weekly savings for Christ's cause is by the collection of money in jugs. Set before them at the start some object for their gifts, that they may think and talk about it while they are saving; otherwise their minds are lifted no higher than their money. And how they will enjoy the jug-breaking!

Class-Books.—Not records of class attendance, but books for the library, paid for by the various classes, selected by these so far as their choice seems wise, and each of them bearing an inscription telling what class presented it to the school. Such gifts give the scholars a personal interest in the library they have helped to create.

Loan Libraries.—Instead of giving away the books your school has thoroughly read, loan them, in groups of fifty or so, to poorer schools. They will return them in good condition, and by that time there will

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be many new scholars in your own school to whom the books will be fresh.

Exchange Libraries.—There is no reason why neighboring schools, if their library funds are low, should not arrange to buy different books, and then exchange them after the original purchasers have used them for a year. All the schools in a town or township might well combine in an arrangement so economical.

Receiving the New Books.—The library will be advertised if the reception of new books is made an event. They may be put in a public place, all at one time, and formally presented to the school by pastor or superintendent, with a word about each. This may be done at Christmas, Easter, Children's Day, Thanksgiving, at any one or all of these holiday seasons.

Honor the Donors.—A special and attractive label for books presented to the library, with a space for the name of the person that makes the gift, will greatly increase the number of books received in this way.

Their Own Paper.—A large Sunday-school may publish a little weekly or monthly paper, the advertisements paying the bills. The older scholars will be interested in doing the work. The notes about the various classes, the library, the contributions, the school work, will all prove stimulating.

Sunday-School Calendars.—A good standing advertisement of the school in any home would be a neat calendar of the year, bordered with facts about the school, invitations, pictures of church, pastor, Sunday-school officers, and the like.

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A Bulletin Board.—A conspicuous bulletin board, placed at the entrance, will save giving out many a notice.

The Notices.—The wise superintendent will plan every word he is to say before the school, even—yea, especially!—the giving of the notices. These notices will be the fewest possible; don't let the Sunday-school be used as a bill-board. Announce only what you want the scholars to remember, and in such a bright way that they can't forget it. And don't discredit your perspicuity and their attention by announcing it more than once.

Protect the Teacher.—One of the most important of the superintendent's duties is to protect the teacher from interruption during the recitation hour. A similar duty is to see that the time for the recitation suffers no diminution through the tardiness or prolixity of himself or any one else.

Substitute Groups.—The work of "substituting" may well be divided up. Ask a set of older scholars to be ready to substitute on the first Sunday of each month, another set on the second Sunday, and so on.

The Pastor as Substitute.—Certainly the pastor should not take a Sunday-school class of his own. That would be unfair to the rest of the school and the church. But he would get into helpful contact with a large number of people, young and old, if he should act every Sunday as a substitute teacher, now in this class and now in that.

A Five-Minute Meeting.—A few minutes of con-

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ference, immediately after the session of the school, will be a great help and stimulus to the teachers. One will ask help in a difficulty, another will report a method just proved successful. Everything will come fresh and vital from living experience.

How Many Absent?—Often let the secretary, in his report to the school, state only the number *absent* from each class and department. He will thus change the emphasis, and arouse a new and profitable interest.

A Roll-Call.—It takes time, but at long intervals a public roll-call of the entire school is worth while. Of course it should be well advertised beforehand, and the entire membership will wish to be present. Then make the hour so delightful that they will not think of staying away thereafter.

Honor Rolls.—Hang a large sheet of paper in a conspicuous position, and announce that you will print upon it the name of every one that brings in a new scholar. A red paper star after the name signifies one new scholar, a blue star a second scholar, and so on. A similar roll may be used to honor perfect attendance, stars of different colors being used for the different quarters.

Gold and Silver Stars.—There are well-based objections to any distinction of one class above another, but a plan that will be found very valuable, at least as a temporary stimulus, is this: Honor with a large silver star every class that has all its members present, and with a gold star each class that reports all its

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members bringing Bibles, and that all have studied the lesson at least twenty minutes.

An Asterisk.—If by banners or in other ways you honor regular attendance, there will be a tendency to drop absent scholars from the rolls too quickly, because they lower the standard of their classes. An excellent way of getting around this difficulty is to “star” the name of every scholar that has been absent a month. This asterisk means that the name is not to be counted in making up the report, but the presence of the name on the list means that the scholar is not to be forgotten or neglected.

To Console Him.—One bright superintendent scorns to give a reward or prize for new scholars, but presents a nice leather-bound Bible, by way of compensation, to each scholar that for any cause is luckless enough to *leave* his school!

A Spur.—Enforce punctuality by a large placard hung in front of the school, and reading, “You are early.” When the school opens the card is turned, and now reads, in staring letters, “You are late!”

A Question Drill.—This is a good plan for teachers' meetings. The teachers should ask questions on each verse, turn about, and the leader should criticise the questions.

Teachers'-Meeting Roll-Call.—To insure previous study of the lesson, and to accustom the teachers to take part in the meeting, let the roll be called every week, and require each teacher to respond with some

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thought concerning the lesson, usually a comment on some particular verse.

Attendance on the Teachers' Meeting.—It will prove a helpful spur if this attendance is recorded regularly, and incorporated in all the reports made by the secretary to the school.

Union Teachers' Meetings.—If you cannot have a teachers' meeting for your Sunday-school alone, because you have no good leader, you can probably find a good leader in some neighboring church, and can give him and yourselves the stimulus of a large union gathering. This plan has many advantages, notably the opportunity for the comparison of methods. It has one great disadvantage: the work cannot apply so particularly to your individual school.

A Reception Class.—New scholars may all be placed in a "reception class," until their ability, knowledge, and character can be learned.

A Visitors' Register.—This is for the names and home addresses of all visitors. The little attention required to obtain these autographs pleases them and their friends, and breaks the ice for further acquaintance. The register should be kept open on some table in a central spot, with pen and ink always at hand.

An Address-Book.—This should contain, under proper and convenient classifications, the addresses of all scholars, teachers, and officers, past and present. It should always be kept in the church, and many will be the references to it.

A Cradle Roll.—This contains the names of the

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babies of the church, for each of whom his mother is given a certificate of membership. This roll is read once in a while before the primary class.

Individual Histories.—At least one school has enough personal interest in its scholars to keep a history of each, in a book properly arranged for that purpose. This history includes the date of the scholar's joining the school and of his promotion to the various higher departments thereof, his birthday and the names of his parents, their church-membership, where the scholar lived when he joined the church, whom he married and when, his business, the date of his removal and the city to which he went, together with other and special facts.

District Reporters.—Appoint one scholar or teacher to watch each street in town,—preferably, of course, the street on which he resides,—and report promptly all newcomers, that they may be invited to the Sunday-school.

The Opening Prayer.—Let the ushers admit no one till it is over. Do not begin, or permit any one else to begin this prayer, till every head is bowed. Do not ask any one to offer this prayer without giving long notice; no haphazard prayer will answer.

Their Own Bibles.—A Bible in the hands of every scholar,—this alone makes possible variety and zest in the opening of the school.

Lesson Introductions.—In small schools it has often been found profitable for the superintendent to spend ten or fifteen minutes teaching to the entire school

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(with the exception of the primary department) the historical and similar details of the lesson. The teachers then add the lesson truths, teaching their individual classes.

Varying Programmes.—If the opening exercises of the school get into a rut, it is hard for the teachers to lift the school out of it. Some wise superintendents plan these exercises for weeks ahead, keeping careful record, and thus avoid monotony.

An Impressive Close.—One school closes its service with the Lord's Prayer, repeated by all as they stand. Then the school is seated, and waits in silence while the ushers, walking slowly up the aisles, dismiss each class in turn.

A Closing Prayer.—Here is a beautiful prayer to be repeated in concert at the close of school: "May the light of thy Word, O Lord, dwell in us richly, and guide us day by day. Amen."

Scripture in Closing.—To incite to Scripture memorizing, close the school with Bible verses repeated by all the scholars. Let each class in turn select the subject, such as "temperance," "obedience," "love," and announce it a week in advance.

The Teachers before the School.—Now and then ask some teacher to say a few words to the entire school at the close of the session, summing up the most important teachings of the hour. This gives the whole school a bit of inspiration from each teacher in turn, and gives to each teacher the inspiration of talking to the whole school.

Chapter XLIV

From a Teacher's Notebook

Birthday Letters.—Little children will prize highly a cordial, loving letter written to them by their teacher on their birthday. Doubtless the very oldest scholars in the school will prize such a letter as much, if not even more. There should be no preachment in these letters, no hitting at peculiar sins; just fill them with Christian sunshine. A birthday prayer in the class, short, simple, earnest, will clinch to the scholar the lessons of the day.

Class Letters.—When the teacher is away on a vacation or for other reasons, a letter sent each week to some member of the class, taking the scholars in order, will be shared with the other scholars, and will strengthen the bond that the absence might have weakened or broken.

Teaching by Correspondence.—When the teacher must be absent, if she cannot find a good substitute, and the class is of a suitable age for the plan, let her send a letter containing a few thoughts on the lesson,

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together with many questions, which the class are to discuss, and for which, after joint consultation, they will prepare written answers, to be sent to the teacher.

The Lesson Message.—Do you fear that the central truth of the lesson may not be impressed on your class, either through your forgetfulness or because you lack time? Then write out for each scholar a sentence or two of exhortation, with a request that he read a certain appropriate passage of the Bible. Place these messages in envelopes, and distribute them at the close of the lesson.

A Teacher's Loan.—If you have found a book that would be especially helpful to your class, by all means, if you can afford it, buy a copy, circulate it among the class, and, after all your scholars have read it, present it to the library.

Birthdays of the Great.—Utilize in your teaching not only Washington's birthday and Lincoln's, but the birthday of any great man whose life may help to point the moral of the day's lesson. For this purpose, one of the many "birthday-books" is of value for reference.

A Magazine Club.—The members of a Sunday-school class have similar interests, and an ideal magazine and paper club may be organized among them. Incidentally, it will enable the teacher to direct much of their reading. The periodicals subscribed for are to be passed around in a specified order, kept at each house a definite time, and each finally retained by some member of the class.

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Class Names.—It will prove an inspiration to any class to have a good name, such as "Earnest Seekers," "Willing Workers," "The Joshua Band," "Daughters of Ruth."

Five-Minute Preludes.—Brief preludes on current topics or practically helpful points connected with the lesson theme may be found valuable in the Bible class, just as similar preludes have proved useful in the preaching service.

Independence.—Occasionally request the class to prepare so thoroughly that they can leave at home the quarterly, lesson leaf, even the Bible itself. The teacher also will do this; and if he improves his opportunity, this thorough storing of the mind may result in a recitation so delightful that the class will adopt the plan enthusiastically for the future.

Her "Funny Box."—A teacher tells how she lightened the occasional sickness of her scholars by carrying to them what they called her "funny box," which held fruit and flowers, with scores of merry jokes clipped from the papers, peanuts marked with comical faces, and a Bible verse or two on the inside of the cover.

A Review Picture-Gallery.—If you have been using the blackboard during the quarter, try a blackboard review. Draw twelve picture-frames, and call up the scholars one by one, asking each to fill in one of the frames with what he remembers of the blackboard work of that lesson. It may be necessary for the teacher to remind the scholar what the design was,

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and to help him draw it, or the entire class may be asked to give this assistance.

An Essay Review.—Divide the lessons of the quarter among your scholars, so that each will write an essay on some one lesson; or, if your class is too small for that, assign two lessons apiece to some of the scholars. Limit them as to time, but let each choose his line of treatment.

Silent Prayers.—If we always word the children's prayers for them, they will be unlikely ever to word prayers for themselves. Often request them to bow their heads and in silence to ask the Father for what they need and thank him for his kindness.

Class Prayers.—Why should not every class recitation be opened with a brief prayer, and often close with one? Yes, and when the talk in the middle of the lesson becomes especially earnest, prayer is the best means of binding the truth to the lives of your scholars.

A Prayer Calendar.—This is a list of the scholars in your class, plus the name of the teacher, divided among the days of the week, that of the teacher falling on Sunday. The whole is headed with a promise to pray each day for the persons named for that day. Each of the scholars has a copy, and signs it.

Pegs.—Draw a good-sized map of the country you are studying, and mount it on a board. With a gimlet bore holes wherever there is an important town, mountain, lake, or other geographical feature whose location you wish your scholars to learn. Fit

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pegs into these holes, and color the pegs white for the mountains, red for the cities, blue for the bodies of water. Teach the scholars, as you call for Hebron, for instance, to place a red peg in the proper hole, and thus to use the map.

Dissected Maps.—Paste a good-sized map of the desired country on thick cardboard or pasteboard. If you cannot get a large enough map, draw one yourself, and in the process you will learn much geography. Then cut the map into irregular pieces, and present it to the younger classes for them to fit together.

Putty Maps.—With a board foundation and a good map for a guide, any teacher can build up a relief map of Palestine out of putty. Paint the water blue, the sandy portions yellow, the fertile plains green, the mountains white or gray, the cities red. Letter with black.

Colors and Places.—A good way to aid the children's memory as to the location of the various lessons of the quarter is to write on the blackboard the title of each lesson as it comes, using each week a different color, and pinning to an outline map, at the same time, a scrap of paper of the same color. Of course, if a later lesson falls at the same place, the old color will be used in writing its title.

Home Drawings.—Some teachers wisely require their scholars to reproduce at home what they can remember of the blackboard work of the day, and bring in the result the next Sunday. The test is one

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for the teacher's blackboard work as well as for the scholars' memory.

Utilizing your Reading.—Every teacher should keep either a wide-margin Bible, or an interleaved Bible, solely to note the helps on Bible texts he may note in his reading. If the book or periodical is your own, simply set down the page opposite the Bible verse. Some may prefer a system of envelopes, one for each book of the Bible, in which clippings may be filed, as well as slips of paper containing references to books.

One Way of Preparing.—Cut up the Scripture text found on a lesson leaf, and paste the verses on large sheets of paper, leaving liberal space around each. In this space write your own comments, and the suggestions you glean from your reading.

On the Spot.—If one of your scholars is reported sick, why not pen—or *pencil*—a little note immediately, with the aid of the class, and send it to the sick scholar at the close of the school? A message thus written will move graciously upon the class as well as upon the recipient.

Prompt Investigation.—“A stitch in time saves nine.” Apply this maxim to your scholar's *first* absence, and look him up at once.

Lookout Committees.—Divide each class into three companies. Company A will seek recruits for the class, Company B will hunt up absentees, and Company C will do hospital service among the sick. Require regular reports.

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Reports of Study.—Some teachers issue to their scholars blank reports, which they return, filled out, each Sunday. These reports tell whether they have studied the lesson for ten minutes each day, and what verses of the lesson they do not understand.

Reports to Parents.—The work done in Sunday-school should be so definite that it can be reported. Certain points should be required to be learned in each lesson, and when they are well recited, or when they are not recited, the parents should know of it. Regular monthly or quarterly reports, sent by postal-card, will stimulate the scholar to learn better, the parents to help him study, and the teacher to teach with system, definiteness, and persistency.

Collection and Record.—Give the mother, for her child, fifty-two little envelopes in which to put a year's pennies or nickels. Each child's envelopes are given a number, so that the collection is also a record of attendance.

More than a Straight Mark.—A simple but complete record may be made by a few strokes of the pencil. A cross has been suggested. The upper arm signifies "present"; the lower arm, "prompt"; the left-hand arm, "the lesson learned," according to a definite standard; the right-hand arm, "present at church." If the scholar has failed in one or more of these points, the corresponding arms are omitted from the cross.

Class Photographs.—With your own camera or some friend's take a group picture of your class once

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a year. You may give them at that time a pleasant "photograph party," or take an excursion together to some place, there to be photographed. Each scholar should have a copy of the resulting picture. It will be delightful if all the classes can thus be photographed, and an exhibition arranged of the entire series of pictures, which then becomes the property of the school.

Holidays Together.—A teacher especially successful in holding together a class of boys is in the habit of taking them with him on all sorts of excursions,—to libraries, museums, points of historical interest, on sleigh-rides, to hear illustrated lectures. And often he arranges for them merry parties at his home.

A Class Symbol.—Some concrete token, presented when the new scholar joins the class, will greatly help to cement the relationship. This may be a little book, a ribbon book-mark, an illuminated Scripture card, a simple emblematic pin. Whatever it is, it should be the same for all, that it may serve as a sort of class badge.

Introduction Cards.—These are of use to make new scholars acquainted with their classmates. The card contains the names of Sunday-school, teacher, and all the scholars, that of the new scholar being last, with the date of entrance. The whole is of immediate service to the new member, and is sure to be preserved as a pleasant memento.

A Work for Each.—Enlist each of your scholars in some definite and individual work for Christ. One

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may gather up old periodicals for the seamen, one may be interested in a children's hospital, one may collect partly worn garments for the poor. At each meeting of the class call for brief reports of these special lines of work. There could be no better commentary on the lessons your scholars are studying.

Substitute Teachers.—The teachers should obtain their own substitutes, whenever possible. If the superintendent makes it clear that he expects this, it will usually be done. In the process of obtaining the substitute, too, the teacher will probably gain fresh sympathy and consideration for the superintendent.

A Class Historian.—Appoint one scholar to this office. Ask him to keep track of the old members, and report any interesting news concerning them, at the same time keeping a record.

Essays.—Your scholars will appreciate the honor if asked to prepare essays now and then on special points in the lessons, such as "Jewish customs regarding Sunday," "The city of Antioch," "What the Bible teaches about temperance." Such essays should be very brief.

Supplemental Lessons.—The very interest aroused by the International Lessons calls often for supplementary lessons, dealing with such topics as the origin of the Bible, Bible geography, the Christian doctrines. Ten minutes preceding the regular lesson may be spent on such themes, and a great deal thus learned in the course of the year.

An Expedient.—If a boy is especially mischievous

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and restless, make him an usher and set him to keeping the rest in order.

A Study Outline.—Each member of a certain class was furnished with a copy of the following excellent programme for home study of the lesson: “1. Intervening events. 2. Time. 3. Place. 4. Persons. 5. Incidents. 6. Parallel passages and Scripture references. 7. Difficulties. 8. Doctrines and duties. 9. Central thought. 10. Personal application—to myself, to others.”

Question-Books.—Blank-books in which questions on the lesson have been written, with spaces for answers, may profitably be used even in very young classes. The answers should be written immediately on the conclusion of the teaching, or even, question by question, as the teaching proceeds. In older classes, the questions may be set before the class a week later, and may introduce the next lesson, by way of review.

Home-Made Question-Books.—To induce your scholars to study at home, provide for each of them two little blank-books. Write a question in one, and request the return of the book next Sunday with the answer written out. Exchange it for the second book, and so alternate. Wise teachers will slip into such books many a personal word of praise or exhortation.

A Question Formula.—Ask each member of the class to bring you, every Sunday, written answers to a set of questions so general that, once dictated, they

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will serve for all lessons; for instance: "When occurred the events of our lesson? What is a brief synopsis of our lesson? What is its principal teaching? Which is your favorite verse in it, and why?" These answers should be discussed in the class.

Trained as Questioners.—In most schools there is no normal class, and if the teachers do not train their scholars to teach, the next generation of teachers in that school will be untrained. The class should be taught how to ask questions, and probably the best way to do this is to have them occupy a few minutes at the beginning of each recitation questioning one another on the previous lesson.

A Choice of Questions.—For this exercise the teacher writes a number of questions, which she brings to the class. Each scholar in turn is permitted to select a question, which he will propound to any of his classmates he may pick out.

The "Bible Library."—This is a help to learning the order of the books of the Bible, and consists of sixty-six wooden blocks, painted and lettered to represent books, and varying in thickness with the size of the various books of the Bible. The poetical books are "bound" in the same style, the minor prophets in a different style, and so with other "sets." These imitation books are kept on shelves, from which they are taken by the children, to be replaced in the correct order.

Bible-Reading Lessons.—Many scholars read the Bible wretchedly; they have never been taught how.

Sunday-School Success

If this is the case with your class, have them read the lesson, verse about, before you discuss it. After the reading, criticise it, and have them repeat it.

Two Bibles.—If the scholars will not bring their Bibles to school,—and the boys especially are likely to think it will look “goody-goody,”—the next best plan is to give each of them a second Bible for his own use during the school hour.

Marked Bibles.—Teach the scholars to mark their Bibles, writing, for instance, the “key-word” at the beginning of each book; underscoring the leading sentence of a chapter; marking with red all passages referring to Christ as our Saviour; writing a P after every promise; “railroading,” or connecting with a neatly drawn line, phrases that are antithetical or mutually explanatory, etc. One set of colored inks will answer for the class. The scholars will delight in the work, it will induce them to bring their Bibles to school, and will teach them how to use the Book.

Bible Dialogues.—Where the lesson text includes conversation, get the scholars to read it in dialogue form, or to come with it thus written out.

Home Bible-Reading.—The school may be set to reading the Bible at home, if lists of readings for each day of the week are written on cards by the teachers, and given out, to be returned, signed, in token that the reading has been accomplished.

A Divided Primary Department.—In large schools, where the superintendent of the primary department teaches the lesson for ten or fifteen minutes, and then

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hands the classes over to her assistant teachers, it is best for those teachers to spend their time in eliciting from the children, by questions, the facts and truths just taught them. Thus you will make sure of something gained.

A Week-Day Meeting.—It has been proved possible to sustain, in connection with a primary department, a week-day meeting for special and supplementary teaching, including singing, mission studies, and Bible history and geography.

Introducing Prayer.—This little verse, recited in concert, is used in many primary departments just before the prayer service:

“ We fold our hands that we may be
From all our work and play set free ;
We close our eyes that we may see
Nothing to take our thoughts from thee ;
We bow our heads as we draw near
The King of kings, our Father dear.”

The Essentials.—Every child, before leaving the primary department, should know the Commandments, the Beatitudes, the Twenty-third Psalm, the Apostles' Creed or some simple statement of Christian faith, the books of the Bible by name and order and something of their origin, the principal features of the map of Palestine, the chief events in Christ's life. Some of the Old Testament history will of course be added,—creation, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon.

Sunday-School Success

Primary Prayers.—No prayer for the children is so good as prayer by the children. Ask them, one after the other, to name things for which they are grateful. Then give them the formula, "I thank thee, Lord, for . . .," and let them offer prayers of thanksgiving for what they have mentioned. Again, ask each to tell one thing he really wants, and follow with prayers of petition, with the formulas, "Help me, dear Jesus, to be . . .," or, "Give me, dear Jesus," Teach short Bible prayers. Offer longer prayers in brief sentences, which the children reverently repeat after you. For example: "Our dear heavenly Father, . . . we thank thee for this beautiful day, . . . for our homes and fathers and mothers, . . . for our sisters and brothers and friends, . . . and all that thou hast given us to make life happy. . . . Teach us to be helpful to those that are without these blessings. . . . Make us more kind and patient. . . . Help us to do everything thou dost want us to do. . . . For Jesus' sake. Amen."

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